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# "The Harmony of All Things": Music, Soul, and Cosmos in the Writings of John Scottus Eriugena

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# "The Harmony of All Things": Music, Soul, and Cosmos in the Writings of John Scottus Eriugena

## Abstract

In his prodigious philosophical work *Periphyseon*, the foremost intellectual of the ninth century, John Scottus Eriugena (ca. 800–877 CE), defined *musica* broadly and in a way that solicits interdisciplinary applications: “Music is the discipline discerning by the light of reason the harmony of all things in natural proportions which are either in motion or at rest.” In this dissertation, I trace resonances of the *ars musica* in Eriugena’s writings using selections from his three greatest works: *Periphyseon*, his glosses on Martianus Capella’s textbook *De Nuptiis*, and his commentary over Pseudo-Dionysius’s treatise on the Celestial Hierarchy of Angels. Beginning with his comments on Capella, I present ways in which Eriugena’s reflections on music as a liberal art intersect with his discussions of the cosmos and the human soul.

For Eriugena and earlier Neoplatonists, the consideration of quantity related to quantity in ratio was the proper province of *musica*, and this natural ordering corresponded to the overall coherence observed throughout the cosmos. That is, the “natural proportions” in Eriugena’s definition of music included all things that can be studied, visible or invisible. Although some previous musicological considerations of Eriugena’s writings have sought insights on performance practices of the ninth century (e.g., the *organicum melos* question), most have dealt almost exclusively with his description of the harmony of the spheres; this project extends these discussions and explores a fundamental element in Platonic thought neglected in previous studies, i.e., music related to the spheres *and* the human soul. Eriugena’s writings provide a perfect opportunity for such a study.

Using my own translation of Eriugena’s glosses on Martianus Capella’s *De Nuptiis*, I demonstrate how Eriugena’s short treatise on the harmony of the spheres incorporates a discussion on the motions of human souls superimposed upon the planetary system. Furthermore, the ordering of the celestial hierarchy of angels emanating from God is itself proportionally organized, in terms of the nature of each angelic hierarchy and how they interact while relaying the divine oracles. In the end, I demonstrate that a unifying theme in Eriugena’s philosophical writings is the need for central, proportionally defined mediators, whether the sun, which modulates the celestial spheres, the *mese* in the Immutable System of tetrachords, or even specific ranks within the hierarchy of angels.

## Keywords

John Scottus Eriugena, *Periphyseon*, *De Nuptiis*, philosophy of music, liberal arts

## Disciplines

Music | Philosophy

## Comments

- A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty of the College of Music of Florida State University in partial fulfillment for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
- Dr. Charles E. Brewer, Major Professor
- © 2014 John MacInnis

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FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF MUSIC

“THE HARMONY OF ALL THINGS”: MUSIC, SOUL, AND COSMOS

IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN SCOTTUS ERIUGENA

By

JOHN CHRISTIAN MACINNIS

A Dissertation submitted to the  
College of Music  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Degree Awarded:  
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John Christian MacInnis defended this dissertation on March 7, 2014.

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The Graduate School has verified and approved the above-named committee members, and certifies that the dissertation has been approved in accordance with university requirements.

This dissertation is dedicated to the glory of God and with loving appreciation to Victoria Lynn MacInnis.

MULIEREM FORTEM QUIS INVENIET PROCUL ET DE  
ULTIMIS FINIBUS PRETIUM EIUS . . . OS SUUM APERUIT  
SAPIENTIAE ET LEX CLEMENTIAE IN LINGUA EIUS.

PROVERBIA XXXI

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How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!  
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music  
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night  
Become the touches of sweet harmony.  
Sit, Jessica. Look, how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:  
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins,  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

*The Merchant of Venice V.I*

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## ABSTRACT

In his prodigious philosophical work *Periphyseon*, the foremost intellectual of the ninth century, John Scottus Eriugena (ca. 800–877 CE), defined *musica* broadly and in a way that solicits interdisciplinary applications: “Music is the discipline discerning by the light of reason the harmony of all things in natural proportions which are either in motion or at rest.” In this dissertation, I trace resonances of the *ars musica* in Eriugena’s writings using selections from his three greatest works: *Periphyseon*, his glosses on Martianus Capella’s textbook *De Nuptiis*, and his commentary over Pseudo-Dionysius’s treatise on the Celestial Hierarchy of Angels. Beginning with his comments on Capella, I present ways in which Eriugena’s reflections on music as a liberal art intersect with his discussions of the cosmos and the human soul.

For Eriugena and earlier Neoplatonists, the consideration of quantity related to quantity in ratio was the proper province of *musica*, and this natural ordering corresponded to the overall coherence observed throughout the cosmos. That is, the “natural proportions” in Eriugena’s definition of music included all things that can be studied, visible or invisible. Although some previous musicological considerations of Eriugena’s writings have sought insights on performance practices of the ninth century (e.g., the *organicum melos* question), most have dealt almost exclusively with his description of the harmony of the spheres; this project extends these discussions and explores a fundamental element in Platonic thought neglected in previous studies, i.e., music related to the spheres *and* the human soul. Eriugena’s writings provide a perfect opportunity for such a study.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

From Antiquity through the Middle Ages, musical concepts such as harmony and proportional ordering were commonly employed in other academic disciplines such as rhetoric and theology, a situation that speaks to the interdisciplinary considerations of music.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it is not without consequence that the foremost intellectual of the ninth century, John Scottus Eriugena (ca. 800–877 CE), defined *musica* broadly and in a way that solicits interdisciplinary applications: “Music is the discipline discerning by the light of reason the harmony of all things in natural proportions which are either in motion or at rest.”<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this research project is to explain resonances of the *ars musica* throughout Eriugena’s writings, especially in his *Annotationes in Marcianum* (859/60 CE), *Periphyseon* (ca. 864–67 CE; Lat., *De Divisione Naturae*), and *Expositiones in Hierarchiam Caelestem* (865–70 CE). Specifically, beginning with his *Annotationes*, I present ways in which Eriugena’s reflections on music as a liberal art

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<sup>1</sup> A 2011 conference honoring Dr. Charles Atkinson at Ohio State University, “Music in the Carolingian World: Witnesses to a Metadiscipline” addressed this very topic: “It is the goal of this conference to evoke this broader concept of music in the Carolingian sphere, with emphasis on its interdisciplinary consequences for modern research; and in so doing, to argue that Carolingian music, as a field of study, may properly be considered a metadiscipline” (“Music in the Carolingian World: Witnesses to a Metadiscipline,” accessed 25 June 2013, <<http://www.musicandphilosophy.ac.uk/2011/09/event-conf-music-in-the-carolingian-world-witnesses-to-a-metadiscipline/>>).

<sup>2</sup> John Scottus Eriugena, *Periphyseon* I, ed. Edvardvs Jeauneau, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), vol. 161, 48 (PL122:475B): “Musica est omnium quae sunt siue in motu siue in statu in naturalibus proportionibus armoniam rationis lumine dinoscens disciplina.” Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

and all-embracing academic discipline intersect with his understanding of the cosmos and the soul.

Plato had connected music to his examinations of both the human soul and the cosmos, and his followers in later eras used musical terminology to discuss metaphysics.<sup>3</sup> Plotinus (204/5–270 CE), considered a founder of Neoplatonism,<sup>4</sup> used musical terms especially in his discussion of the soul’s ascension to the One in his *Enneads*, e.g., *harmonia* helps the soul perceive the universe and reality, and the soul’s union with the Universal-Soul results in *symphonia*.<sup>5</sup> Neoplatonists after Plotinus continued to engage music and its terminology, despite doctrinal differences between them, e.g., Porphyry, St. Augustine, Martianus Capella, Boethius,

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Francesco Pelosi, *Plato on Music, Soul and Body*, trans. Sophie Henderson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> The term Neoplatonism was first used during the nineteenth century to refer to the work of Plotinus and his followers. Cf., Raymond Erickson, “Boethius, Eriugena, and the Neoplatonism of *Musica* and *Scolica Enchiridis*,” in *Musical Humanism and its Legacy: Essays in Honor of Claude V. Palisca*, ed. Nancy Baker and Barbara Hanning (Stuyvesant: Pendragon, 1992), 53n.1: “Historians of philosophy generally refer to the pre-medieval stages of Platonism after Plato himself (d. 347 BCE) as the ‘Old Academy’ (Plato’s immediate followers), ‘Middle Platonism’ (first century BCE through the second century CE) and ‘Neoplatonism’ (third through sixth century CE). The seminal figure of pre-medieval Neoplatonism is Plotinus (c. 204–70), author of the influential *Enneads*, which were reorganized and defended by his student Porphyry.” I will use the term Platonism broadly to refer to the philosophical traditions traced back to Plato and more specifically when referring to Plato’s actual works. I will use Neoplatonism when referring to Platonic thought as it developed after Plotinus.

<sup>5</sup> Glen Wegge, “Musical References in the Neoplatonic Philosophy of Plotinus” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1999), 14.

Pseudo-Dionysius, and Eriugena, who is rightly considered a culminating figure in Western Neoplatonism.<sup>6</sup>

Eriugena's life and writings are described more fully in Chapter 2; for now, we should note that the century in which Eriugena worked coincides with the "critical nexus" of "tone-system or scale, mode or tone, and musical notation" described by Charles Atkinson.<sup>7</sup> The ninth century was when the first extant medieval music treatises were penned, when the foundations of Western music theory were laid in the first notations of chant, and embryonic principles for polyphony were described in the *Enchiriadis* documents. In fact, the intellectual achievements of Carolingian civilization in the eighth and ninth centuries were so vast and across so many disciplines that the era has been termed the Carolingian Renaissance or *Renovatio*.

### **The Carolingian *Renovatio***

Eriugena lived during a flourishing of culture, learning, and ecclesiastical reform that had begun under the reign of Charlemagne (742–814 CE), with the assistance of Alcuin of York (c. 735–804 CE). The "Carolingian Renaissance" is also sometimes described as the "Carolingian *renovatio*," since Charlemagne and his successors considered their civilization to be a renewal of the Christian Roman Empire, though cultural gains at this time seem to pale in comparison with the so-called Humanist Renaissance beginning around the fifteenth century. Additionally, either term, *renaissance* or *renovatio*, has seemed appropriate when considering the relatively silent period stretching from final fall of Rome to the era of Charlemagne.<sup>8</sup> However it is named, this

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<sup>6</sup> Wegge, "Musical References," 88.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Atkinson, *The Critical Nexus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 4.

<sup>8</sup> In the case of musical culture, a similar situation is observed in the complete lack of Byzantine musical sources between the fourth and ninth centuries. Cf., Evgenij Gertsman, *The Lost Centuries of Byzantine Music*, trans. Svetlana Buko (St. Petersburg: Ministry of Culture of

period included educational advances across a vast territory overseen by powerful centralized governments, beginning with Charlemagne himself, who ruled much of modern Europe at the height of his power as Holy Roman Emperor.

Charlemagne's ambitious aims were spelled out clearly in two important capitularies, *De litteris colendis* (c. 795 CE) and *Admonitio generalis* (789 CE). In the *Admonitio generalis*, Charlemagne promoted the establishment of schools across his empire to teach literacy, especially the Bible, mathematics, and music. He acknowledged that many documents important to performing religious rites, musical and otherwise, needed correction to bring all his subjects into conformity with Catholic faith, properly practiced. Beyond promoting and privileging the religious life of his subjects, Charlemagne also advocated for ancient learning generally. In *De litteris colendis*, he wrote,

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the Russian Federation, 2001). Gertsman judiciously points out that a lack of musical sources does not necessarily indicate a lack of musical activity and cultivation; it only indicates a lack of sources (11). In his chapter "The Revival of Learning," in *The Oxford History of Byzantium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), Cyril Mango discusses the remarkable similarities between the ninth-century revivals of learning in both East and West: "Both were animated by a vision of the renovation of the Roman state, meaning not the pagan, but the Christian empire of Constantine and his successors; both promoted the cultivation of a correct, i.e. ancient, linguistic idiom, which entailed, on the one hand, the assemblage of the relics of "classical" literature for purposes of imitation and, on the other, the compilation of manuals, compendia, and other aids to learning; both were accompanied by the introduction of a more compact script, the minuscule, for book production; both saw the establishment of a palace school; both extended into the visual arts, more particularly the precious arts . . . The similarities were so pronounced that some kind of mutual influence naturally suggests itself. That is not a subject, however, to which much scholarly attention has been directed" (215).

Hortamur vos litterarum studia non solum non negligere, verum etiam humillima et Deo placita intentione ad hoc certatim discere, ut facilius et rectius divinarum scripturarum mysteria valeatis penetrare. Cum autem in sacris paginis schemata, tropi et caetera his similia inserta inveniantur, nulli dubium est, quod ea unusquisque legens tanto citius spiritualiter intellegit, quanto prius in litterarum magisterio plenius instructus fuerit.<sup>9</sup>

We urge you not only not to neglect the study of [ancient] literature, but to learn it eagerly, with humble and devout attention to God, so that you may be able to penetrate more easily and correctly the mysteries of the divine scriptures. Since figures of speech, tropes, and the like may be found within the sacred pages, there can be no doubt that anyone reading them can more quickly understand them spiritually to the extent to which he has first been fully instructed in the mastery of [nonspiritual] literature.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, Charlemagne's empire building necessitated a class of literate, cultured civil servants, and his policies for public education no doubt served that end as well. Charlemagne attracted to his court leading thinkers and scholars from all over Europe, e.g., the Spaniard Theodulf of Orléans, Agobard, the grammarian Peter of Pisa, Paul the Deacon, Paulinus of Aquileia, Dungal, Dicuil the geographer, and, most notably, Alcuin of York, Charlemagne's closest royal advisor. As an example of the intellectual values of Charlemagne's court, one can

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<sup>9</sup> *Karoli epistola de litteris colendis*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, ed. Alfred Boretius (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1881), 79.

<sup>10</sup> Atkinson, trans., *Critical Nexus*, 51.

note their fondness for biblical and classical cognomens, e.g., Charlemagne was referred to as David and Josiah as well as Caesar.<sup>11</sup>

With the general increase of literacy and greater value placed on the written word, monastic centers increasingly produced scholars along with manuscripts for them to study. For example, the monastery at Corbie was famous for its library and scriptorium and for producing such intellects as the theologian Ratramnus (d. ca. 868 CE).<sup>12</sup> Theological controversy was a primary intellectual pursuit in the Carolingian era; for example, a Spanish variant of Adoptionism was a major issue for Alcuin (could Jesus have been adopted as God's Son?), along with specifying the exact procession of the Trinity. The dispute over Iconoclasm was related to larger political issues of the era and across the ancient world, such as interactions with the Greek East. In 730 CE, Byzantine Emperor Leo III had forbidden images in worship, and a struggle between iconophiles and iconoclasts ensued. The Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in 787 CE restored the use of images in worship, but Charlemagne, unsatisfied with the decision, commissioned his theologians to study the matter. They produced the *Libri Carolini*, which argued, among other things, for more centralized leadership of the Church in Rome and that religious images be allowed in churches, though not worshiped.<sup>13</sup>

At the end of his reign, Charlemagne shared authority with his son and heir Louis the Pious (778-840 CE), who, in 814 CE, became sole Emperor. The opinion of Lupus of Ferrières (805-62 CE), that educational achievements lagged under Louis the Pious, is disputed, and it

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<sup>11</sup> Dermot Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus Eriugena: A Study of Idealism in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 8.

<sup>12</sup> Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 12.

<sup>13</sup> Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 14-15.

may be that learning and scholarship held strong throughout his reign.<sup>14</sup> In 840 CE, Louis the Pious died, and the vast kingdom was divided among his three sons: Louis the German (r. 840–76 CE) controlled East Frankland, Lothair (r. 840–55 CE) inherited a middle kingdom stretching from the Netherlands to modern Italy, and Charles II (r. 840–77 CE) received West Frankland. Lothair had inherited the title Emperor, and the three sons of Louis the Pious supposedly held joint power.

After a period of bloody civil war, the territories were finally divided into three independent units at the Treaty of Verdun in 843 CE, and Lothair maintained precedence. At his death in 855 CE, Lothair's portion of the kingdom was itself divided among his three sons (Lothair II, Charles, and Louis II, who became Emperor). Lothair II ruled the northern portion (Lotharingia) but died without an heir, and his uncles eventually divided this territory between them in 870 CE at the Treaty of Mersen. In 875 CE, Louis II died, and Charles II received the title Emperor, which he held until his death two years later.

Although only seventeen years old when he was made king of West Frankland, Charles II (823–77 CE) immediately began sponsoring educational projects—while fending off Viking raiders and the machinations of family members. As had Charlemagne, Charles II surrounded himself with intellectual advisors, e.g., Hincmar, Bishop of Rheims (806–82 CE), Lupus of Ferrières, and eventually, John Scottus Eriugena. Also similar to Charlemagne, Charles II initiated programs of cultural patronage, which included the production of illuminated manuscripts, architectural projects, and the encouragement of intellectual debates and treatises. For example, in spite of disputes between the Christian East and West (as in controversies over

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<sup>14</sup> Cf., P. Riché, “Les Irlandais et les princes carolingiens aux VIIIe et IXe siècles,” in *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, ed. H. Löwe (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982).

the *filioque* in the Nicene Creed),<sup>15</sup> under Charles II, Eriugena read Eastern authors such as Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus the Confessor, and Pseudo-Dionysius, translating and commenting on their works.<sup>16</sup> In fact, Charles II directly encouraged Eriugena's intellectual engagement with Greek theology.<sup>17</sup> In the preface to his translation of Pseudo-Dionysius, Eriugena addressed Charles II with the following words:

Hinc est, quod et ingenioli nostri parvitatem non dedignati estis impellere, nec nos velut otiosos inertiaeque somno sopitos perpassi estis dormire, ne, dum hesperiis solummodo apicibus studium impendimus, ad purissimos copiosissimosque Graium latices recurrere, haustumque inde sumere non valeremus. Jussionibus itaque vestris neque volentes neque valentes obsistere, rudes admodum tirones adhuc helladicorum studiorum, fatemur—quid enim pudeat nos fateri vestrae serenitudini?—ultra vires nostras ipso tamen duce, qui est lux mentium et illuminat abscondita tenebrarum, libros quattuor sancti patris Dionysii Areopagitae episcopi Athenarum, quos scripsit ad Timotheum, episcopum Ephesiorum, et decem epistolas ejusdem de Graeco in Latinum transtulimus.

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<sup>15</sup> For more on ninth-century religious controversies, cf. Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 13ff.

<sup>16</sup> Concerning Eriugena's engagement with the works of Pseudo-Dionysius, the *Ambigua* of St. Maximus the Confessor, and Gregory of Nyssa's *De hominis opificio*, I. P. Sheldon-Williams writes, "Thus he fortuitously became acquainted with three of the most characteristic and important documents of the Greek Christian Platonism . . ." ("Johannes Scottus Eriugena," in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 519–20.

<sup>17</sup> Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 49.



This is why you did not disdain to impel our feeble talent, nor permit us to slumber on, idle and drowsily inert, lest we devote our interest to the summits of only Western things and not have the strength to repair to the pure and plenteous waters of the Greeks and drink there. Therefore, we were neither willing nor able to resist your commands, while still very unskilled novices in Greek studies—we confess it, for why should we be ashamed to confess it to your Serenity? We have translated from Greek into Latin four books of the holy father Dionysius the Areopagite, Bishop of Athens, who wrote to Timothy, Bishop of Ephesus, and ten of his letters—something beyond our powers, but we were led by Him who is the light of minds and illuminates dark secrets.<sup>18</sup>

Charles II's ability as a ruler can be illustrated in the crises that plagued the first decades of his reign. As recipient of lands in which he possessed no blood ties, Charles II was in a relatively weaker position than Louis the German and Lothair when his father Louis the Pious died, in 840 CE. By shifting alliances from one brother to the other, he was able to establish himself, for a time. A crisis came, in 858 CE, when Louis invaded while Charles II was distracted, fighting Vikings on the Seine. Charles maneuvered ably by gaining support from his nobles and the church through special, financially advantageous allowances, such as minting coins, holding markets, and charging tolls.<sup>19</sup>

As a scholar and courtier in Charles II's retinue, Eriugena evidenced the practiced skills of a poet and a facile handling of the ins and outs of court life; both characteristics can be read in *Auribus Aebraicis*, a poem that praises and intercedes for Charles II. Michael Herren argues for

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<sup>18</sup> MacInnis, trans., *PL*121:1031C-D. Quoted by John O'Meara in *Eriugena* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1988), 52-53.

<sup>19</sup> Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 17.

870 CE as the date of composition, shortly after Charles II occupied Aachen in 869 CE, sitting on his grandfather's throne to observe Christmas Mass that year, and that the poem expresses Charles II's hope to build a church dedicated to Mary at Compiègne similar to his grandfather's.<sup>20</sup> The following is an excerpt from Eriugena's poem *Auribus Aebricis* (lines 82-101):

Magna dei genitrix, ter felix, sancta Maria,  
Te laudant caeli, te votis inclytat orbis.  
Proxima sis Karolo tutrix, munimen et altum,  
Qui tibi mirifice praeclaram fabricat aedem,  
Aedes marmoreis varie constructa columnis,  
Alta domus pulcre centeno normate facta.  
Aspice polygonos flexus arcusque volutos,  
Compages laterum similes, capitella basesque,  
Turres, turiculas, laquearia, daedala tecta,  
Obliquas tyridas, ialini luminis haustus,  
Intus picturas, lapidum pavimenta gradusque,  
Circum quaque stoas, armaria, pastaforia,  
Sursum deorsum populos altaria circum,  
Lampadibus plenas faros altasque coronas.  
Omnia collucent gemmis auroque coruscant;

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<sup>20</sup> Michael Herren, "Eriugena's 'Aulae Sidereae', the 'Codex Aureus', and the Palatine Church of St. Mary at Compiègne," *Studi Medievali* 28 (1987): 607.

Pallia, corinae circundant undique templum.

Ipse throno celso fultus rex prospicit omnes

Vertice sublimi gestans diadema paternum,

Plena manus sciptris enchiridion aurea bactra;

Heros magnanimus longaevus vivat in annos.

Great Mother of God, thrice blessed, holy Mary, the heavens praise you, the world glorifies you with its prayers. Be a tall bulwark and close guardian to Charles, who is building an outstanding temple for you in wondrous fashion. The church is constructed on marble pillars of diverse colors. The high house is beautifully built on the square of one hundred. Behold, the many-angled folds, the curving arches, the consistent fastening of the sides, the capitals and bases, the towers, breastwork, panelled ceiling, and skilfully crafted roof, oblique windows, and draughts of light through the glass. Inside, there are pictures, a floor and steps made of stone; around the portico, in all directions are chests and sacristies; there are people up and down around the altars and lamps filled with lights, crowns on high. Everything shines with gems and flashes with gold. Veils and hangings surround the temple on all sides. The king himself, supported on his high throne and wearing the crown of his fathers on his exalted head, looks over everyone. His hand is filled with sceptres and handles of Bactrian gold. May the magnanimous hero enjoy a long life.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Herren, trans., in “Eriugena’s ‘Aulae Sidereae’, the ‘Codex Aureus’, and the Palatine Church of St. Mary at Compiègne,” *Studi Medievali* 28 (1987): 594-95, (PL121:1236D).

Although Eriugena lived a century after the *Admonitio generalis* and *De litteris colendis*, it is evident from his vast and far-ranging scholarly output that the cultural ideals presented in these earlier Carolingian documents were still alive and well, late in the ninth century. Generally speaking, Eriugena's writings were markedly speculative, mining past authorities and synthesizing new formulations.

### **Significant Authors and Authorities during the Ninth Century**

As a part of their support for learning and scholarship, Carolingian rulers, such as Charles II, amassed large libraries, especially containing works from Antiquity deemed authoritative. In ninth-century scholastic writing, it was expected that knowledge be built upon the foundation of earlier accepted writers, and some examples of influential works read by Eriugena are listed below. If the following litany of authors and authorities read and studied during the ninth century seems a rather broad overview, it should be remembered that, almost without exception, each discusses *musica* in some way or deals in an aspect of philosophy to which the *ars musica* speaks. This attests to the comprehensive nature of learning at the time and the central importance of music studied as a liberal art.

To begin with, Eriugena, as a typical scholar of the Carolingian *renovatio*, knew the Latin Bible and church fathers, especially Augustine (354-430 CE). In fact, throughout his writings, Eriugena takes special pains to stress his submission to Scripture and consonance with Catholic faith, perhaps in response to his conciliar condemnations. For example, Eriugena wrote, in *Periphyseon* I,

Siquidem de deo nil aliud caste pieque uiuentibus studioseque ueritatem quaerentibus  
dicendum uel cogitandum, nisi quae in sancta scriptura reperiuntur; neque aliis nisi ipsius

significationibus translationibusque utendum his qui de deo siue quid credant siue disputent. Quis enim de natura ineffabili quippiam a se ipso repertum dicere praesumat praeter quod illa ipsa de se ipsa in suis sanctis organis, theologis dico, modulata est?

Accordingly, nothing else must be said or thought concerning God by those who live pure and pious lives and are earnest seekers after the truth except what is found in Holy Scripture, and no meanings or metaphors but its own are to be used by those who either believe in or discourse about God. Indeed, who would presume to say about the Ineffable Nature anything invented by himself, except such meanings as it [i.e., the Ineffable Nature] has itself played concerning itself upon its sacred instruments, I mean, the theologians?<sup>22</sup>

Of all Latin authorities, Eriugena quotes most often from Augustine (e.g., *De Genesi ad litteram*, *De civitate Dei*, *De musica*, *De ordine*, etc.), and even names Augustine his intellectual father.<sup>23</sup>

Eriugena, literate in Greek, read and translated Greek fathers as well; especially Gregory of Nyssa (e.g., *De hominis opificio*), but also Basil (e.g., *Hexaëmeron*) and Gregory Nazianzus, in addition to later Greek theologians such as Maximus the Confessor (e.g., *Ambigua*) and Pseudo-Dionysius, who is discussed more fully below. Eriugena also knew Origen, the

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<sup>22</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Periphyseon* Book I, CCCM 161, 93 (PL122:509B).

<sup>23</sup> John O'Meara, "Contrasting Approaches to Neoplatonic Immaterialism: Augustine and Eriugena," in *From Athens to Chartres: Neoplatonism and Medieval Thought*, ed. Haijo Jan Westra (New York: Brill, 1992), 175.

Alexandrian philosopher; for example, Eriugena quotes from Origen's *De principiis*, and their thinking aligns on several important issues, such as God's eternal act of creation.<sup>24</sup>

Regarding his facility with Greek, Eriugena's self-deprecating statements to Charles II in the preface to his Latin translation of Pseudo-Dionysius, quoted above, should be understood as an example of the forms of humility and submission assumed by writers at that time. But Eriugena did make several repeated mistakes in his translations, so one may safely surmise that his knowledge of Greek was impressive but not perfect. For example, Eriugena often mistook οὐκουν for οὐκοῦν and the aorist tense for the imperfect.<sup>25</sup> It is significant to note that Eriugena's contributions as a translator of Greek lay not only in the ideas he made available in Latin, but also in the wording he employed. To this point, O'Meara wrote, "[Eriugena's] translations made an original contribution to philosophy, inasmuch as by them he introduced into the West not only a philosophical vocabulary bearing the marks of Aristotle, but also Pseudo-Dionysian ideas, cosmological doctrines coming from Gregory of Nyssa, and spiritual approaches derived from Maximus the Confessor."<sup>26</sup>

*De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* by Martianus Minneus Felix Capella (fl. early fifth century CE) was widely read and discussed throughout the Middle Ages as a summary of the liberal arts.<sup>27</sup> In addition to introducing the *artes*, *De Nuptiis* also presented a primer of Neoplatonic thought and summarized aspects of Aristotle's categories. To summarize the plot of

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<sup>24</sup> Cf., *Periphyseon* V, CCCM 165, 98ff (PL122:929Aff.).

<sup>25</sup> O'Meara, *Eriugena*, 53.

<sup>26</sup> O'Meara, *Eriugena*, 55.

<sup>27</sup> For a translation, see William Harris Stahl's and Richard Johnson's *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts, Volume II, The Marriage of Philology and Mercury* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977). For the Latin, see James Willis's edition, *Martianus Capella* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1983).

*De Nuptiis*, Mercury, seeking a wife, is advised to take Philology, symbolizing human learning. She ascends through the heavens, is deified, and joins the court of the gods. To Philology, Mercury presents a dowry of seven maidens, symbolizing the seven liberal arts, each of whom discourses on her respective discipline, and then Mercury and Philology are wed. The abstruse vocabulary and recondite sentences of *De Nuptiis* necessitated a tradition of glosses, in which Eriugena participated; a more thorough description of Eriugena's commentary on Capella is included below, along with the editions and translations consulted for this project.

Another ancient authority on philosophy and learning read during the ninth century was Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (ca. 480-520 CE). Eriugena quoted Boethius's *De institutione arithmeticae* and *Theological Tractates*, and surely knew *De consolazione philosophiae* and *De institutione musica*—though these works are not cited explicitly in his oeuvre.<sup>28</sup> Henry Chadwick summarizes the question of whether Eriugena knew *De institutione musica* this way:

Except for the *Arithmetica*, it is not easy to be confident how much of Boethius is known to [Eriugena]. Allusions to the *Arithmetica* are frequent (*PL*122: 498B-C, 505B, 651Bff., 655A-B). His doctrine that the Liberal Arts are created by God (748D-749A, etc.) is not directly anticipated by Boethius. But music and harmonic principles are for him part of the structure of the cosmos, exemplified in the harmony of the spheres. It is hard to affirm

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<sup>28</sup> Cf., Marie-Elisabeth Duchez, "Jean Scot Erigene, premier lecteur du *De institutione musica* de Boece?" in *Eriugena: Studien zu seinen Quellen*, ed. Werner Beierwaltes (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1980), 165-87.

or to deny that he had read Boethius' *Institutio musica*, to which he makes no explicit reference. In ideas the kinship is obvious, and ignorance is unlikely.<sup>29</sup>

The *Institutiones divinarum et saecularium litterarum*<sup>30</sup> of Cassiodorus (ca. 490-583 CE) and the *Etymologiae*<sup>31</sup> of Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636 CE) were both encyclopedic summaries of knowledge and introductions to philosophy used by medieval scholars. For example, Isidore's *Etymologiae* proved useful in explaining unfamiliar terminology during the shadowy period stretching from the death of Boethius to the Carolingian era. Both Cassiodorus and Isidore mention the *ars musica* and include it as part of a comprehensive educational program.

As was the case for most scholars of the ninth century, Eriugena's only access to Plato was through Calcidius's partial translation of (through Section 53C) and commentary on *Timaeus* (completed late fourth century CE).<sup>32</sup> This portion of *Timaeus* describes the origin of the cosmos and mankind. A work similar to Calcidius's commentary on *Timaeus* is Macrobius's

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<sup>29</sup> Boethius, *the Consolations of Music, Logic, Theology, and Philosophy* (New York: Oxford, 1981), 297n.11. Cf. John Marenbon, *Early Medieval Philosophy (480–1150): An Introduction* (Boston: Routledge, 1988), 47–48.

<sup>30</sup> Cf., Cassiodorus, *An Introduction to Divine and Human Readings*, trans. Leslie Jones (New York: Octagon Books, 1966).

<sup>31</sup> Cf., Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, trans. Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, Oliver Berghof (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>32</sup> Stephen Gersh, *Concord in Discourse: Harmonics and Semiotics in Late Classical and Early Medieval Platonism* (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996), 129.



commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, another speculative description of the cosmos that Eriugena quoted in his *Annotations*.<sup>33</sup>

All these authorities, known to Eriugena, were studied by ninth-century scholars and frequently cited in music treatises from the ninth century, e.g., *Musica Disciplina* by Aurelian of Réôm (f. 840–50 CE), *Epistola de armonica institutione* by Regino of Prüm (ca. 842–915 CE), and *De Musica* by Hucbald of St. Amand (ca. 850–930 CE). The famous *Enchiriadis* documents are a definitive example; throughout *Musica* and *Scholica enchiriadis* the authors survey theoretical knowledge of the past (e.g., defining the modes, probing connections between music and human nature, and calculating the music of the spheres) and explain issues connected to Carolingian musical praxis (e.g., dasian notation and the improvisation of *organum*), all the while quoting many of the aforementioned authors.<sup>34</sup> So many ancient authorities could be called on to address the subject of music, and to good effect, precisely because of the consistent inclusion of music among the liberal arts, a comprehensive educational program inherited from Antiquity.

### **The Liberal Arts during the Ninth Century**

The liberal arts were those studies considered in Antiquity to be fundamental to freeborn persons and to their living a virtuous and profitable life. The standard list of seven disciplines (i.e., those described by Capella) was generally divided into two groups: the *trivium* (grammar, dialectic, rhetoric) and *quadrivium* (geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and music). Although the arts were considered together as an essential summary of knowledge, teachers believed there was

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<sup>33</sup> Cf., *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio by Macrobius*, ed. William Stahl (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

<sup>34</sup> Cf., *Musica Enchiriadis and Scholica Enchiriadis*, ed. Raymond Erickson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

an educational progression as one moved from the *trivium*, or language arts, to the *quadrivium*, or mathematical arts.<sup>35</sup> The following quotation presents a description of the quadrivial arts by Boethius, who actually coined the term *quadrivium* in his *De arithmetica*:

Hoc igitur illud quadrivium est, quo his viandum sit, quibus excellentior animus a nobiscum procreatis sensibus ad intellegentiae certiora perducitur. Sunt enim quidam gradus certaeque progressionum dimensiones, quibus ascendi progredique possit, ut animi illum oculum, qui, ut ait Plato, multis oculis corporalibus salvari constituique sit dignior, quod eo solo lumine vestigari vel inspicere veritas queat, hunc inquam oculum demersum orbatumque corporeis sensibus hae disciplinae rursus inluminent.<sup>36</sup>

Therefore, this is that fourfold path [*quadrivium*], which is to be traversed by those whose more excellent mind is led away from our bodily senses to a higher level of knowing. For there are definite steps and clear degrees of progressions by which one is able to ascend and to progress, so that these disciplines might again bring light to that eye of the soul—which, as Plato says, is far more worthy to be saved and cultivated than a multitude of corporeal eyes, for Truth is searched for and perceived by the light of this eye alone—yet, he asserts, that eye is submerged and laid waste through the corporeal senses.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> In a following section, I discuss more fully the Neoplatonic context for the liberal arts and their relation to the three-part division of philosophy observed in Platonic thought since Plutarch: ethics, physics, and epoptics.

<sup>36</sup> Boethius, *De institutione arithmetica*, ed. Gottfried Friedlein (Frankfurt: Minerva, 1966), 9-10.

<sup>37</sup> Bower, trans., “Quadrivial Reasoning,” 59.

The liberal arts remained essential components of learning throughout the Middle Ages, and no less for Eriugena.

Eriugena's earliest datable work, *De divina praedestinatione* (c. 851 CE),<sup>38</sup> was his contribution to the predestination debate stirred up by Gottschalk of Fulda (ca. 800–868 CE), discussed more fully below. In his treatise, Eriugena expounded his own view, the impossibility of double predestination, and argued that Gottschalk's grave errors (*stultissima crudelissimaque insania*) stemmed from his lack of learning in the liberal arts.<sup>39</sup> For example, Eriugena wrote,

Therefore, I would think that the gravest error of those who confusedly and, hence, fatally reduce to their own distorted meaning the opinions of the venerable fathers, especially Saint Augustine, had its beginnings from an ignorance of the useful arts, which wisdom itself wanted to be its own companions and investigators, and, on top of that, ignorance also of Greek writings in which the interpretation of predestination generates no mist of ambiguity.<sup>40</sup>

But Eriugena's argument turned out to be a liability; in his rebuttal, *De praedestinatione contra Joannem Scotum* (quoted below), Prudentius of Troyes accused Eriugena of being led astray 1) by his extensive study of the liberal arts and 2) by Martianus Capella in particular:

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<sup>38</sup> John Scottus Eriugena, *De Divina Praedestinatione*, ed. Goulven Madec, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*, Volume 50 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1978).

<sup>39</sup> Gottschalk had argued his case from early Church leaders like Augustine, asserting that since God's will is immutable, the eternal destiny of souls *ad vitam* or *ad mortem* had been decided before creation (Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 30).

<sup>40</sup> Eriugena, *Treatise on Divine Predestination [De Divina Praedestinatione]*, trans. Mary Brennan (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 117 (Chapter 18).

1) Jam nunc in nomine [Dei] et adjutorio labyrinthum tuarum haereseon adituri, gratiam ejus sine quo nihil sumus, scimus et possumus, invocemus, ut ipsa duce tuas inextricabiles moras penetrare easque inoffenso gressu evadere valeamus, nequaquam tui quadruvii innodationibus ac depravationibus, sed auctoritati et veritati medullitus innitentes.

Now, in the name of God and by His help, as we are about to assail the labyrinth of your heresies—for without His grace, we are nothing, we know nothing, and we can do nothing—let us invoke Him so that, by this guide, we should be strong enough to penetrate your tangled obstacles and to avoid them by walking blamelessly. By no means will we lean on the knots and depravities of your *quadrivium*, but thoroughly upon authority and truth.<sup>41</sup>

2) Nam ille tuus Capella, exceptis aliis, vel maxime te in hunc labyrinthum induxisse creditur, cujus meditationi magis quam veritati evangelicae animum appulisti.

For that Capella of yours is believed to have led others into this labyrinth—but especially you—to whose thinking you have directed your mind by greater meditation than to the truth of the Gospel.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> MacInnis, trans., *PL*115:1020D.

<sup>42</sup> MacInnis, trans., *PL*115:1294A-B.

As a result of this controversy over predestination, Eriugena was condemned at the synods of Valence in 855 CE and Langres in 859 CE, but he was evidently protected and able to continue his career as a scholar.<sup>43</sup>

The two attitudes toward liberal learning expressed in the account above, Eriugena's high regard and Prudentius's suspicion, were both common during the Carolingian era, as they had been among Christians in late Antiquity. At the same time that ancient authorities were respected and their works copied and treasured, some wondered just how far they could be trusted, inasmuch as they were not Christian. Although doubts persisted for some Carolingians, no less an authority than St. Augustine had argued that liberal learning was positive for Christians. For example, in the following example from *De doctrina christiana*, Augustine urges study of music as a liberal art, even from non-Christian sources, because of the benefits it can afford in understanding Scripture:<sup>44</sup>

But whether the fact is, as Varro has related, or is not, so still we ought not to give up music because of the superstition of the heathen, if we can derive anything from it that is of use for the understanding of Holy Scripture; nor does it follow that we must busy ourselves with their theatrical trumpery because we enter upon an investigation about harps and other instruments, that may help us to lay hold upon spiritual things. For we ought not to refuse to learn letters because they say that Mercury discovered them; nor,

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<sup>43</sup> Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 32ff.

<sup>44</sup> The sorts of insights Augustine mentions in *De doctrina christiana* as examples of those provided by the liberal arts do seem rather unimpressive. For example, in the case of music, he thought the ten-stringed psaltery (cf. Psalm 32:2, *Vulgate*) possibly corresponded to the Decalogue (*De doctrina christiana*, §26).

because they have dedicated temples to Justice and Virtue, and prefer to worship in the form of stones things that ought to have their place in the heart, ought we on that account to forsake justice and virtue. Nay, but let every good and true Christian understand that whatever truth may be found, it belongs to his Master; and while he recognizes and acknowledges the truth, even in their religious literature, let him reject the figments of superstition, and let him grieve over and avoid men who, “when they knew God, glorified him not as God neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”<sup>45</sup>

As can be read below, the liberal arts had also been championed by other respected Christian authorities such as 1) Cassiodorus in *Institutiones diuinarum et saecularium litterarum* and 2) St. Isidore in *Etymologiarum*. For these authors, music was a fundamental subject of study because the order observed throughout creation corresponds to harmonic principles:

1) The discipline of music is diffused through all the actions of our life. First, it is true that if we perform the commandments of the Creator and with pure minds obey the rules he has laid down, then every word we speak, every pulsation of our veins, is related by musical rhythms to the powers of harmony. Music, indeed, is the knowledge of proper measurement [*scientia bene modulandi*]. If we live virtuously, we are constantly proved to be under its discipline, but when we commit injustice we are without music. The heavens and the earth, indeed, all things in them, which are directed by a higher power,

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<sup>45</sup> Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, Book II:18, accessed February 3, 2014, *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*, < <http://www.ccel.org>>. Translator Unknown.

share in this discipline of music, for Pythagoras shows that this universe was founded by and can be governed by music.<sup>46</sup>

2) Thus, without music no discipline can be perfect, for there is nothing without it. The very universe, it is said, is held together by a certain harmony of sounds, and the heavens themselves are made to revolve by the modulation of harmony. Music moves the feelings and changes the emotions. In battles, moreover, the sound of the trumpet rouses the combatants, and the more furious the trumpeting, the more valorous their spirit. A chant, likewise, encourages the rowers, music soothes the mind so that it can endure toil, and song assuages the weariness encountered in any task. Music also composes distraught minds, as may be read of David, who freed Saul from the unclean spirit by the art of melody. The very beasts also, even serpents, birds, and dolphins, are enticed by music to listen to her melody. Indeed, every word we speak, every pulsation of our veins, is related by musical rhythms to the powers of harmony.<sup>47</sup>

As a short case study in ninth-century thinking with regards to music as a liberal art, one could consider *Musica Disciplina* by Aurelian of Réôm (fl. 840-50), the earliest extant medieval treatise of music. Although not mentioned by contemporaneous authors, *Musica Disciplina* provides helpful insight into Carolingian musical practices and repertoire as well as the development of music theory at that time. *Musica Disciplina* is divided into two sections: one

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<sup>46</sup> In *Source Readings in Music History*, ed. Oliver Strunk and Leo Treitler (New York: Norton, 1998), 144.

<sup>47</sup> In *Source Readings in Music History*, ed. Oliver Strunk and Leo Treitler (New York: Norton, 1998), 150.

with quotes about music from ancient sources (e.g., Boethius,<sup>48</sup> Cassiodorus, Isidore of Seville, etc.) and one containing an explanation of the eight modes (here they are called tones). In this latter section, Aurelian describes the origins, importance, and genres of plainchant, and it is fascinating to observe how he, along with subsequent ninth-century music theorists, attempted to apply the Pythagorean diatonic musical system to the repertoire of plainchant sung by the Carolingians.<sup>49</sup>

In contrast to his contemporaries and forebears, for whom liberal arts such as music were often simply an encyclopedic body of knowledge, Eriugena's views on the liberal arts were nuanced and complex.<sup>50</sup> To begin with, he asserted that the *trivium* and *quadrivium* constituted a perfect statement of knowledge that come already integrated within the immortal human soul:

Num tibi uerisimile uidetur certaeque rationi conueniens omnes liberales disciplinas in ea parte, quae ΕΝΕΠΤΕΙΑ (id est operatio) animae dicitur, aestimari? Siquidem a philosophis ueraciter quaesitum repertumque est artes esse aeternas et semper

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<sup>48</sup> In quoting Boethius's *De institutione musica*, Aurelian appropriated Boethius's distinction between *musicus* (a scholar who judges music in intellectual ways) and *cantor* (a mere singer), but argues in favor of the *cantor*; Aurelian wants the *cantor* to be skilled and insightful through the study of music theory. Aurelian also reproduced Boethius's tripartite division of music into *musica mundana*, *musica humana*, and *musica instrumentalis*. Additionally, Aurelian included descriptions of music's power in the myth of Orpheus, who is said to have tamed beasts with music, the myth of Pythagoras discovering the consonant harmonic ratios while walking by a blacksmith's shop, and, of course, the music of the spheres.

<sup>49</sup> It should also be noted that *Musica Disciplina* contains some of the earliest examples of musical notation in the West.

<sup>50</sup> Cf., Herbert Schueller, *The Idea of Music: An Introduction to Musical Aesthetics in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1988), 291.



immutabiliter animae adhaerere ita ut non quasi accidentia quaedam ipsius esse uideantur, sed naturales uirtutes actionesque nullo modo ab ea recedentes nec recedere ualentes nec aliunde uenientes sed naturaliter ei insitas, ita ut ambiguum sit utrum ipsae aeternitatem ei praestant quoniam aeternae sunt eique semper adhaereant ut aeterna sit, an ratione subiecti quod est anima artibus aeternitas administratur—OYCIA enim animae et uirtus et actio aeternae sunt—an ita sibi inuicem coadhaereant, dum omnes aeternae sint, ut a se inuicem segregari non possint.

Does it not seem true to you and consistent with sound reason that all the liberal arts are considered to be in that part which is called the ἐνέργεια, that is the operation, of the soul? Accordingly, it has been rightly sought and found by the philosophers that the arts are eternal and are always immutably attached to the soul so that they seem to be not certain accidents of it, but natural powers and actions which by no means withdraw nor are willing to withdraw nor come from anywhere, but are innate in it naturally, so that it is uncertain whether it is the arts which confer eternity upon it, because they are eternal and eternally attached to it, or whether it is by reason of the subject, which is the soul, that eternity is supplied to the arts—for the οὐσία and the power and the operation of the soul are eternal—or whether they mutually cohere, while all being eternal, so that they cannot be separated from one another.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Periphyseon* I, CCCM 161, 62–63 (PL121:486C).

Eriugena even went so far as to equate the arts with the eternal *Logos*, since Christ Himself is the end of all knowledge and inquiry.<sup>52</sup> For example, in the following excerpt from his *Expositiones in Hierarchiam Caelestem*, Eriugena describes the arts as *liberales* and *naturales* (a specification Calvin Bower argues was influential on Regino of Prüm, who wrote of *musica naturales* and *musica artificiales*).<sup>53</sup>

Ita naturales et liberales discipline in unam eandemque interne contemplationis significationem adunantur, qua summus fons totius sapientie, qui est Christus, undique per diuersas theologie speculationes insinuatur. Et fortassis hoc est quod per Psalmistam de beato uiro dicitur: “Et erit tanquam lignum quod plantatum est secus decursus aquarum,” hoc est, sicut Christus erit, in cuius significationem typicam omnes naturales artes, intra quarum terminos tota diuina concluditur scriptura, concurrunt. Nulla enim sacra scriptura est, que regulis liberalium careat disciplinarum.

Thus, the natural and liberal disciplines are united in one and the same signification of internal contemplation, which is the greatest fount of all wisdom, who is Christ, in all

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<sup>52</sup> Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 135.

<sup>53</sup> That is, just as Regino described the study of music experienced corporally as a sort of gateway to understanding music that is transcendent, he drew on the tradition practiced by Eriugena, who understood all the liberal arts, including music, as leading the mind and soul toward ultimate truth (Calvin Bower, “Quadrivial Reasoning and Allegorical Revelation: ‘Meta-Knowledge’ and Carolingian Approaches to Knowing,” in *Carolingian Scholarship and Martianus Capella: Ninth-Century Commentary Traditions on ‘De nuptiis’ in Context*, ed. Sinead O’Sullivan and Mariken Teeuwen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 67–68).

respects taught through the diverse speculations of theology. And perhaps this is what was said by the psalmist concerning the blessed man, “And he will be like a tree planted beside the flowing of waters” [Psalm 1:3]; that is, he will be like Christ, into whose figurative signification all the natural arts flow, within the boundaries of which all divine Scripture is contained. Indeed, there is no Holy Scripture that exists independent of the principles of the liberal disciplines.<sup>54</sup>

From the preceding quotation it is evident that, for Eriugena, the projects of intellectual inquiry summarily presented in the liberal arts also served a redemptive purpose in the soul’s pursuit for God.<sup>55</sup> Elsewhere Eriugena went so far as to assert, “No one enters heaven unless through philosophy.”<sup>56</sup> In fact, Eriugena was not the first to affirm spiritual progress through study of the liberal arts within a broader intellectual context prizing philosophical study, which contained its own divisions.

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<sup>54</sup> MacInnis, trans., Eriugena, *Expositiones in Ierarchiam Coelestem*, ed. J. Barbet, in *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975), vol. 31, 16 (PL122:139C–140A). The mention of theology in this passage may be confusing if it is not remembered that Eriugena equated the study of philosophy and religion: “Conficitur inde ueram esse philosophiam ueram religionem conuersimque ueram religionem esse ueram philosophiam.” (Indeed, true philosophy is just like true religion and, conversely, true religion is just like true philosophy.) (G. Madec, ed., *Iohannis Scotti De divina praedestinatione liber*, in *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* (Turnholt: Brepols, 1978), vol. 50, 5.)

<sup>55</sup> John Contreni, “John Scottus, Martin Hiberniensis, the Liberal Arts, and Teaching,” in *Carolingian Learning: Masters and Manuscripts* (Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing, 1992), 4–5.

<sup>56</sup> *Annotationes in Marcianum*, ed. Cora Lutz, Mediaeval Academy of America 34 (1939), 64: “Nemo intrat in celum nisi per philosophiam.”

## Neoplatonism as Philosophical Context for the Liberal Arts

In the Ancient Academy, philosophy was broadly divided into ethics (or the practical sciences), physics (study of the sensible world), and dialectics (study of the Forms).<sup>57</sup> In fact, the works of Platonic philosophers, beginning with those of Plato himself, were divided into corresponding categories, e.g., *Timaeus* was considered representative of Plato's physics.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, the *Enneads* of Plotinus (204/5-270 CE) were organized by Porphyry (ca. 234-305 CE) into a comparable three-part division and reflected an important idea: philosophy's three parts comprise a pedagogical program of intellectual and spiritual progression.<sup>59</sup> That is, ethics constitutes spiritual purification by mastery of the passions, physics corresponds to a practiced detachment of the soul from the sensible world through contemplation of incorporeal realities, and epoptics (or metaphysics, or theology) parallels the soul's contemplation of the highest principle of all things.<sup>60</sup>

The roles of the liberal arts within formal philosophical study varied greatly in the Platonic tradition, and this topic is related to the broader issue of how philosophy was viewed in

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<sup>57</sup> Pierre Hadot, "Les divisions des parties de la philosophie dans l'Antiquité," *Museum Helveticum* 36 (1979): 206.

<sup>58</sup> Pierre Hadot, "Les divisions," 219.

<sup>59</sup> Pierre Hadot explained that a pedagogical order in the parts of philosophy is first observed in Stoic philosophers and that this order reflects a spiritual progression, beginning with concern for the material matters of daily life and culminating in a higher wisdom (Pierre Hadot, "Les divisions," 215-16). Cf., Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, trans. Arnold Davidson (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1995), 126.

<sup>60</sup> Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 137. Cf. Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2002), 153-55. Pierre Hadot identifies Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*, as the first identification of epoptics as the culmination of philosophic study in "Les divisions," 218.

relation to theology. For example, the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 BCE – 50 CE) devised an educational curriculum in which liberal arts such as grammar, rhetoric, geometry, and music were studied as propaedeutic for Greek philosophy (understood generally as the study of philosophic discourse), which was viewed as superior, and, in turn, surpassed by the Wisdom of God.<sup>61</sup> Christian leaders, such as Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150 – 215 CE) and Origen (ca. 185 – 283 CE), utilized a similar schema, though they substituted a Christian philosophy for Philo’s Mosaic orientation.<sup>62</sup> In explaining this hierarchy of studies (liberal arts, Greek philosophic discourse, and theology) in Christian Neoplatonism, Pierre Hadot writes, “From this point of view, therefore, philosophy was the servant of theology from Christian antiquity onward. It contributed its own knowhow, but was forced to adapt itself to the demands of its mistress.”<sup>63</sup>

Ilsetraut Hadot, in her comprehensive work *Arts Libéraux et Philosophie dans la Pensée Antique*, argued convincingly that the now famous list of seven liberal arts was assembled in the specific philosophical context of Neoplatonism, though the nature of the curriculum within each discipline was not always distinctly Neoplatonic.<sup>64</sup> For example, Martianus Capella’s *De Nuptiis* presented the seven liberal arts along with many Neoplatonic elements, but, in composing his summary of each discipline, Capella drew on sources that did not necessarily share Neoplatonic understandings. It is actually in Augustine’s *De musica* that one finds the development of a curriculum in accordance with distinctly Neoplatonic thinking—in which study of the physical

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<sup>61</sup> Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, 255.

<sup>62</sup> Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, 256.

<sup>63</sup> Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, 256.

<sup>64</sup> Ilsetraut Hadot, *Arts Libéraux et Philosophie dans la Pensée Antique* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1984), 154.

world provides insight into the intelligible forms, and this process is considered of spiritual benefit.<sup>65</sup>

Following Augustine, and, therefore, clearly participating in this Neoplatonic tradition, Eriugena also urged consideration of the physical world for insight into the spiritual world.<sup>66</sup> For example, in the following quotations from 1) Eriugena's *Periphyseon* III (§723B-C) and 2) that portion of Augustine's *Retractationes* where he reconsiders his treatise *De musica*, both men pointed to Romans 1:20 as biblical warrant for seeking the intelligibles through study of the material world:

1) diuina tamen auctoritas rationes rerum uisibilium et inuisibilium non solum non prohibet, uerum etiam hortatur inuestigari. "Inuisibilia enim eius," ait Apostolus, "a creatura mundi per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur." Non paruus itaque gradus est, sed magnus et ualde utilis sensibilium rerum notitia ad intelligibilium intelligentiam. Vt enim per sensum peruenitur ad intellectum, ita per creaturam reditur ad deum.

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<sup>65</sup> Ilsetraut Hadot, *Ars Libéraux*, 154-55. "[*De musica*], qui compte six livres, est un exemple achevé de la mise en pratique de la théorie philosophique qu'Augustin avait développée dans le livre II du traité *Sur l'ordre*: il souligne partout le rapport de la musique avec les nombres corporels et incorporels, caractérise l'écoulement de la phrase rythmée et mélodique comme un *motus rationabilis*, donc comme un mouvement ordonné à l'aide des nombres et finalement de la raison, et le dernier livre est destiné exclusivement à faire valoir le fondement intelligible de la musique sensible."

<sup>66</sup> Herbet Schueller, in *The Idea of Music*, explains that Eriugena would also have read in Pseudo-Dionysius's *Celestial Hierarchy* (e.g., in Books I and II) this principle of seeking insight into God's higher, invisible reality from truths learned in the physical world (292-93).

The Divine Authority does not prohibit investigating the reasons of visible and invisible things, but actually encourages it. For, the Apostle says, “from the creation of the world His invisible things are seen, being understood from the things that have been made.” Therefore, it is no small step but a large and greatly profitable one from the notice of sensible things to the understanding of intelligible things. For, as through sense we arrive at understanding, so through creation we return to God.<sup>67</sup>

2) Deinde, ut supra commemoravi, sex libros de Musica scripsi; quorum ipse sextus maxime innotuit, quoniam res in eo digna cognitione versatur, quomodo a corporalibus et spiritualibus, sed mutabilibus numeris, perveniatur ad immutabiles numeros, qui jam sunt in ipsa immutabili veritate, et sic invisibilia Dei, per ea quae facta sunt, intellecta conspiciantur.

Next, as I mentioned above, I wrote six books *On Music*. The sixth of these was especially well known, because in it a matter worthy of investigation was taken up—how from corporeal and spiritual but changeable rhythms [*numeris*], one comes to the knowledge of unchangeable rhythms [*numeros*] which are already in immutable truth, and, in this way, the invisible things of God, being understood through the things that are made, are clearly seen.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Periphyseon* III, CCCM 163, 148-49 (PL122:723B-C).

<sup>68</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Retractationes*, PL32:600-601.

One may note that, in these quotations, it is music as member of the *quadrivium*, i.e., one of the mathematical sciences, that clearly furnishes insight into the metaphysical realm. In this way, there is a connection of the liberal arts to the Neoplatonic divisions of philosophy; those arts of the *quadrivium* correspond to the second division of physics, for they train the soul to seek a higher reality from that one presented by the physical world. An earlier, non-Christian example of this principle is observed in how Plotinus stressed throughout his *Enneads* that the soul's ascent to the One must be by reason (since it is an image of the Divine Intellect) and via those arts, like music, which train the mind to discern the intelligibles through sensibles, e.g., *Enneads* I.3.1:

We will begin by describing the nature of the musician. We must consider him as easily moved and excited by beauty, but not quite capable of being moved by absolute beauty; he is however quick to respond to its images when he comes upon them, and, just as nervous people react readily to noises, so does he to articulate sounds and the beauty in them; and he always avoids what is inharmonious and not a unity in songs and verses and seeks eagerly after what is rhythmical and shapely. So, in leading him on, these sounds and rhythms and forms perceived by the senses must be made the starting-point. He must be led and taught to make abstraction of the material element in them and come to the principles from which their proportions and ordering forces derive and to the beauty which is in these principles, and learn that this was what excited him, the intelligible harmony and the beauty in it, and beauty universal, not just some particular beauty, and



he must have the doctrines of philosophy implanted in him; by these he must be brought to firm confidence in what he possesses without knowing it.<sup>69</sup>

In conclusion, it is in the Neoplatonic tradition, which prized the spiritual benefits of study, that Eriugena participated as a scholar of the liberal arts. That is, for Eriugena, through study of the liberal arts, one gains insight into the created order, but, more importantly, one's soul is strengthened and able to perceive the more ultimate spiritual reality of the cosmos. Such determination to glimpse God intellectually in everything, here and now, actually constituted the most important spiritual benefit for Eriugena, for, in his understanding of the final union of all things with God, some souls are forever lost in willful fantasies, forever blind to the beatific vision. The nuances of Eriugena's intellectual accomplishments are addressed more fully in the following, but, for now, one may well ask to know more about the background of this brilliant Irishman.

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<sup>69</sup> Plotinus, *Enneads* I, trans. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 155.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE WORKS OF JOHN SCOTTUS ERIUGENA

#### John Scottus Eriugena

Although his name is rendered variously, “John Scottus Eriugena” is the spelling used in most modern works about Eriugena.<sup>70</sup> Eriugena originated from Ireland and came to work in the court of Charles II (“the Bald”) sometime before 851 CE, possibly as early as 840 CE.<sup>71</sup> Around 851 CE, Bishop Pardulus of Laon mentioned Eriugena in a letter (*Scotum qui est in palatio regis, Joannem nomine*)<sup>72</sup> and that he was requested to contribute to the predestination debate stirred up by the Saxon monk Gottschalk.<sup>73</sup> This letter by Pardulus is the first recorded mention of Eriugena, and Eriugena’s resulting treatise, *De divina predestinatione*, is his earliest known work.

Much can be learned about Eriugena, his thinking, and his interaction with Carolingian intellectual life from his role in the predestination controversy. For example, *De divina predestinatione* presents carefully formulated arguments using dialectical reasoning about the nature of God and the problem of evil.<sup>74</sup> Generally speaking, Eriugena was confident in his scholarly abilities, facility with the liberal arts, and knowledge of theology; at times his Latin

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<sup>70</sup> The name “Eriugena” (“Irish-born”) was invented by John Scottus himself, and he used it to sign his translation of Pseudo-Dionysius’s works (860–62 CE) (Dermot Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus Eriugena: A Study of Idealism in the Middle Ages* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 49). Although it has become conventional practice, adding the name Eriugena to Scottus is somewhat redundant, since both names refer to John’s Celtic background.

<sup>71</sup> Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 27.

<sup>72</sup> *Epistola ad ecclesiam Lugdunensem*, in *De tribus epistolis*, PL121:1052a.

<sup>73</sup> Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 27.

<sup>74</sup> Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 32.

style borders on the flamboyant.<sup>75</sup> He quotes Augustine extensively, since the controversy arose over questions of how Augustine's doctrine of election was to be properly understood.

To Eriugena's thinking, earthly life is an opportunity for perfection and salvation.<sup>76</sup> This opportunity, this freedom comes at a cost, though; for Eriugena, humans bear responsibility to respond to God's grace and reject evil in this life or suffer eternal punishment in a hell of their own making. Although his arguments center on correctly expounding Augustine's writings, Eriugena also references Greek theologians such as Gregory of Nyssa, which exhibits his conversance with Greek writings at this time.<sup>77</sup>

The response to *De divina predestinatione* was not positive. Eriugena was lambasted by Hincmar, Florus, and Prudentius; for example, Prudentius called Eriugena a *vaniloquus et garrulous homo*, repudiated their friendship, questioned his scholarly abilities, and derided his lack of rank within the Church.<sup>78</sup> In fact, the 850s CE were a hard decade for Eriugena; besides these slanders, published and read by his peers, Eriugena was officially condemned at the council of Valence in 855 CE and again in 859 CE at Langres. His views were attacked severely, probably due to their intellectual sophistication, which outstripped contributions published by his contemporaries.<sup>79</sup> All in all, we learn from the controversy that Eriugena was a scholar known throughout the ninth century, who possessed a commanding knowledge of theology and the

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<sup>75</sup> Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 30.

<sup>76</sup> Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 32.

<sup>77</sup> Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 33.

<sup>78</sup> Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 33.

<sup>79</sup> J. Devisse, *Hincmar: Archevêque de Reims 845-882*, Vol. 1 (Geneva: Droz, 1975), 150-51.

liberal arts, a refined Latin style, and an independent spirit willing to debate. Even today, he is remembered as one of the most important Latin philosophers between Boethius and Anselm.<sup>80</sup>

It remains uncertain where Eriugena spent his time while employed by Charles II, who supported a palace school in the Laon region, perhaps at Quierzy, Laon itself, or Compiègne.<sup>81</sup> Also, there is no certain knowledge of his exact position; perhaps he was a cleric or monk. Biographical interest in Eriugena began in the twelfth century in the writings of William of Malmesbury (e.g., *De gestis regum anglorum* and *De gestis pontificum anglorum*). William believed that Eriugena did serve at the Carolingian court but, in the end, returned to England and settled at Malmesbury.<sup>82</sup> Eriugena's supposed amiable relationship with Charles II is relayed by William by way of a famous joke; the king is said to have asked while dining, "*Quid distat inter sottum et Scottum?*" (What separates a drunkard from an Irishman?). Eriugena nimbly replied, "*Tabula tantum*" (Only a table).<sup>83</sup> We also learn from William the legend of Eriugena's martyrdom; his students are said to have stabbed him to death with their pens.

Eriugena's ability as a scholar, the opinion of his pupils notwithstanding, is attested by his vast and varied output. His comments on Martianus Capella's *De Nuptiis* are certainly extensive and display specific and speculative knowledge of the liberal arts. As mentioned previously, Eriugena translated and commented on Greek works by Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus

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<sup>80</sup> Dermot Moran, "John Scottus Eriugena," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008 Edition), ed. Edward Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu>> (accessed May 31, 2012).

<sup>81</sup> John O'Meara, *Eriugena* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1988), 14. Moran states that early on Charles II's court was peripatetic, so it is probable that scholars traveled with him as part of his retinue (Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 18–19).

<sup>82</sup> Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 37.

<sup>83</sup> *De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum Libri Quinque*, ed. N. E. S. A. Hamilton (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 392.

the Confessor, and Pseudo-Dionysius, and composed poetry. He also wrote a famous commentary on the Gospel of John (*Commentarius in Evangelium Iohannis*) and corresponded with other intellectuals of his day. In many of these writings, not to mention the massive *Periphyseon*, his greatest achievement, Eriugena employed and privileged his knowledge of the discipline of music.

### ***Annotationes in Marcianum***

The *ars musica* was known to Carolingian scholars primarily through two sources inherited from Late Antiquity, Capella's *De nuptiis (DN)* and Boethius's *De institutione musica (DIM)*. *DIM* is dedicated solely to *musica*, and its importance is observed in a lengthy gloss tradition beginning in the ninth century. In contrast, *DN* encompasses all the liberal arts, and each art influences and informs the others to varying degrees. In the case of the *ars musica*, musical references appear throughout the first two books of *DN*, and Harmonia makes her presentation to the wedding party last of all the maidens who symbolize the liberal arts. Indeed, after her discourse in Book IX, it is Harmonia who then leads the bride and groom to their nuptial chamber at the story's end.<sup>84</sup> The overall importance of Harmonia is confirmed by Capella at the beginning of Book IX, when Apollo declares of her, "It would be a grave offense to exclude from this company the one bridesmaid who is the particular darling of the heavens, whose performance is sought with joy and acclamation."<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Mariken Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres: The Ars Musica in Ninth-Century Commentaries on Martianus Capella* (Boston: Brill, 2002), 15.

<sup>85</sup> William Stahl, *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts*, Vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 346. I should point out that, in contrast to my assertion, Ilsetraut Hadot, in *Arts Libéraux et Philosophie dans la Pensée Antique* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1984), did not read Harmonia's placement at the end of *DN* as emphasis: "A

Calvin Bower characterizes these works by Boethius and Capella as representing contrasting intellectual contexts and two different orientations to *musica*; *DIM* demonstrates “quadrivial reasoning,” while *DN* represents “allegorical revelation.”<sup>86</sup> For Boethius, the process of reasoning in each quadrivial discipline was meticulous and oriented the human mind upward toward incorporeal essence.<sup>87</sup> This upward orientation resulted in “higher knowledge,” spiritual insight into the Divine.<sup>88</sup> In Capella’s marriage of Philology and Mercury, a wedding of human and divine intellects, knowledge and insight are again central, but they are gained not primarily through abstract reasoning but progressively and symbolically.<sup>89</sup> Both *DN* and *DIM* are united in one important respect: their standing among the Carolingians represents a shift from how *musica* was treated primarily in terms of language in Late Antiquity (e.g., Augustine’s *De musica*) to terms and forms principally mathematical by the ninth century.

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partir du livre III commence la présentation des sept sciences cycliques, à raison d’une science par livre, dans l’ordre suivant: grammaire, dialectique, rhétorique, géométrie, arithmétique, astronomie, harmonie (= musique). L’ordre des sciences mathématiques doit probablement son caractère inhabituel à des raisons purement artistiques: le récit des sept sciences sera suivi par les noces de Mercure et de Philologie, et il était donc convenable de finir par la discipline qui puisse habilement faire la transition avec les chants de l’hyménée. La dernière place, qui est assignée à la musique, s’explique, je crois, par cette considération” (149).

<sup>86</sup> Bower, “Quadrivial Reasoning,” 57.

<sup>87</sup> Bower, “Quadrivial Reasoning,” 59.

<sup>88</sup> Bower, “Quadrivial Reasoning,” 60.

<sup>89</sup> Calvin Bower, Keynote Address: “*Musica* as Metadiscipline” at “Music in the Carolingian World: Witnesses to a Metadiscipline (A Conference in Honor of Charles M. Atkinson),” 28-29 October 2011, Ohio State University. Bower asserted that, considering the glosses on *DN* and *DIM*, more attention is paid to issues of actual singing by early commentators on *DN* than by those who discuss *DIM*.

Eriugena's lengthy glosses on the musical portions of *DN* stand out as some of the most speculative and philosophically oriented of his generation.<sup>90</sup> In these *Annotationes in Marcianum*, Eriugena wrote fluently concerning music theory and its connections to cosmology, drawing upon Calcidius and Macrobius.<sup>91</sup> Eriugena's *Annotationes in Marcianum* are preserved in several manuscripts, notably, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Latin 12960 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. T.2.19. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Latin 12960 was created in the monastery of St. Pierre in Corbie in the late ninth century, and it was edited and printed in 1939 by Cora Lutz.<sup>92</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. T.2.19, dating from the late ninth or early tenth centuries, is probably from St. Vincent in Metz. Jeauneau published an edition of Eriugena's glosses on *DN* Book I in the Oxford manuscript in 1978.<sup>93</sup> Some scholars assert that the Paris and Oxford manuscripts come from different periods in Eriugena's career, an original draft and then a revision of his comments upon *DN*, and others, such as Jeauneau himself, consider them both to be derived from an earlier, more complete source.<sup>94</sup>

Three other manuscripts feature Remigius's comments on the first five books of *DN* and Eriugena's comments on the last four quadrivial books: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, 331; Paris,

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<sup>90</sup> Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 47–48.

<sup>91</sup> Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 152–53.

<sup>92</sup> Regarding Lutz's edition, Teeuwen writes, "The edition contains erroneous readings and should be used with caution" (*Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 42n.136).

<sup>93</sup> Eduard Jeauneau, "Le commentaire érigénien sur Martianus Capella (De nuptiis, Lib.I) d'après le manuscrit d'Oxford (Bodl.Libr. Auct.T.2.19, fol. 1-31)," in *Quatre thèmes érigéniens*, Montreal, Paris 1978, 91–166.

<sup>94</sup> Cf., Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 45–46 for a summary of the different perspectives.

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Latin 8675; and Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, 3222.<sup>95</sup> Aside from one portion of the Oxford manuscript translated separately by Jocelyn Godwin and Mariken Teeuwen, there is no English translation of Eriugena's glosses on *DN*.<sup>96</sup>

### ***Periphyseon***

Eriugena's *Periphyseon* (Lat. *De divisione naturae*, "On the Division of Nature") remains the outstanding philosophical achievement of the ninth century for its breadth and intellectual innovation.<sup>97</sup> Written as a dialogue between a learned teacher (Nutritor) and his able pupil (Alumnus) and spanning five books, *Periphyseon* presents a four-part outline of the entire cosmological order (*Natura*) as it proceeds from and returns to God: nature which creates and is not created (i.e., God), nature which creates and is created (i.e., the Primordial Causes), nature which is created and does not create (i.e., the Created Temporal Effects), and nature which is neither created nor creates (i.e., Non-Being). Most basically, Eriugena's goal in *Periphyseon* was to construct a thoroughly reasoned, Christian explanation of the universe, drawing upon both Greek and Latin authorities.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 42–43.

<sup>96</sup> Joscelyn Godwin, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 1987), 104–8 and Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 219–26.

<sup>97</sup> Cf., Dermot Moran's description of *Periphyseon* in his article on Eriugena in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Similarly, in the preface to his translation of *Periphyseon* Book I, I. P. Sheldon-Williams writes, "*Periphyseon*, running to more than half a million words, is the most impressive piece of philosophical writing between the ages of St. Augustine and St. Thomas" (*Scriptores Latini Hiberniae*, vol. 7 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1999), vii).

<sup>98</sup> Myra Uhlfelder, trans., *Periphyseon* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1976), xxii.



Although studied extensively in the twelfth century, *Periphyseon* was condemned by Pope Honorius III in 1225. Apparently there was some connection between the works of Eriugena and two Aristotelian scholars teaching in Paris early in the thirteenth century, Amaury of Bène and David of Dinant. As the result of several councils, culminating in a papal bull, Amaury and David were condemned—along with the works of Aristotle and, by association, Eriugena. In Pope Honorius III’s letter of 1225 to the bishops of France, he condemned *Periphyseon* as “teeming with the worms of heretical perversity.”<sup>99</sup> Despite this condemnation, interest in *Periphyseon* persisted throughout the Middle Ages and was revived after Thomas Gale’s printed edition of 1687.

The earliest surviving manuscript of *Periphyseon* is Rheims, Bibliothèque Municipale, 875, which was itself a copy of an earlier manuscript and the parent of all subsequent copies.<sup>100</sup> In the margins of Rheims, Bibliothèque Municipale, 875, there are some textual additions that were included in later copies, e.g., the recension Bamberg Ph. 2/I. According to I. P. Sheldon-Williams, the Rheims and Bamberg manuscripts could have been copied during Eriugena’s lifetime.<sup>101</sup> Another recension incorporating notes made in the margins of Bamberg Ph. 2/1 is Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Latin 12964.

A critical edition and English translation of *Periphyseon* Books 1–4 was published in *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae (SLH)* volumes 7, 9, 11, and 13 by Sheldon-Williams with help from Ludwig Bieler, John O’Meara, and Édouard Jeuneau. Sheldon-Williams’s critical edition and translation of the final book, Book 5, remained unpublished at his death, in 1973; the translation was revised by John O’Meara and published as part of the *Cahiers d’études médiévales* (Cahier

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<sup>99</sup> Cf., Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 86.

<sup>100</sup> Sheldon-Williams, *Periphyseon* I, 24.

<sup>101</sup> Sheldon-Williams, *Periphyseon* I, 7.

spécial, 3), in 1987. A definitive critical edition of the Latin text of *Periphyseon* was edited by Jeaneau and published in the *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* (CCCM) series, volumes 161-65.

Previous scholars have studied *Periphyseon* looking for insights into musical treatises of the ninth century, but rarely have they sought understanding as to how music as a liberal art was woven throughout the broader project of learning during the Carolingian *renovatio*.<sup>102</sup> For example, in the *organicum melos* debate discussed more fully in Chapter 3, the term *organicum melos* was observed in both *Periphyseon* and the *Enchiridis* documents, leading to speculation of a connection between Eriugena and those treatises.<sup>103</sup> In her 1984 dissertation, Nancy Phillips wondered if “Scot’s terminology ... perhaps inspired the terms describing the modes and chant melodies.”<sup>104</sup>

Musical praxis is referenced throughout *Periphyseon*—for example, Eriugena mentioned organs and singers—but, overall, he considered music philosophically as a liberal art. For example, in the context of Eriugena’s definition of *musica* found in *Periphyseon* Book I, mentioned above, he expounded Aristotle’s ten categories and how the arts are eternal within the

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<sup>102</sup> I should mention the following exceptions: Christine Coallier, “Le vocabulaire des arts libéraux dans le *Periphyseon*,” in *Jean Scot Ecrivain*, ed. G.-H. Allard (Montréal, Bellarmin, 1986); John Contreni, “John Scottus, Martin Hiberniensis, the Liberal Arts, and Teaching,” in *Carolingian Learning: Masters and Manuscripts* (Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing, 1992); Barbara Münxelhaus, “Aspekte der Musica Disciplina bei Eriugena,” in *Jean Scot Érigène et l’histoire de la philosophie* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1977).

<sup>103</sup> Erickson, “Boethius,” 57ff.

<sup>104</sup> Quoted in Erickson, “Boethius,” 58. Phillips’s dissertation is titled “*Musica and Scolica Enchiridis*: The Literary, Theoretical, and Musical Sources” (PhD diss., New York University, 1984).

human soul. In Book V, §869B-C, he explained that the progression of all things from unity to diversity and back to unity is pictured in music theory, because simple and compound harmonies begin with a single pitch. More significantly, a large portion of Book III is dedicated to the *creatio ex nihilo* of the cosmos and the motions of the planets and firmament, and here, as in his commentary on *DN*, Eriugena explains the idea of the music of the spheres, the revolutions of the planets and their supposed connection to musical concepts. For Augustine and Boethius, discussions of the cosmos necessitated engagement with Genesis 1-3 and the creation narratives found there. So too for Eriugena; his questions were asked in terms of the divine origins and destiny of humans and incorporated his understanding of music as liberal art.

In another section of *Periphyseon*, Eriugena used the concept *harmonia* to describe the eternal state and the problem of evil. He drew analogies between the pleasing music that arises from different voices blending in song, and the rewards of the just and the punishment of evil—both produce a harmony of disparate, and, in the case of good and evil, apparently irreconcilable parts.<sup>105</sup>

### ***Expositiones in Hierarchiam Caelestem***

Generally speaking, Eriugena moves beyond a one-dimensional, encyclopedic presentation of *musica* as liberal art (as it is in Cassiodorus and Isidore of Seville) to a more detailed synthesis consistent with the intellectual aims of the Carolingian *renovatio* under Charles II. An important aspect of Eriugena's work is that this synthesis also involved influences of Greek learning, increasingly imported to Frankish lands from Byzantium. For example, before beginning *Periphyseon*, Eriugena completed a translation of Pseudo-Dionysius's *Celestial Hierarchy* (860–862 CE), drawing upon a literal rendering completed by Hilduin (827–834 CE).

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<sup>105</sup> Uhlfelder, *Periphyseon*, 327.

Both Hilduin and Eriugena used a manuscript given to Louis the Pious by Byzantine Emperor Michael II (“the Stammerer”); the manuscript is now located at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Greek 437). In his later commentary on Pseudo-Dionysius’s *Celestial Hierarchy* (*Expositiones in Hierarchiam Caelestem*), Eriugena advanced ideas previously worked out in *Periphyseon*, and Moran questioned if “a full study of the relationship between the *Periphyseon* and the *Expositiones* is called for.”<sup>106</sup> In addition to Eriugena’s comments in *Expositiones* regarding the liberal arts and the project of philosophy/theology quoted above, the pages of Eriugena’s *Expositiones* are replete with talk of the movements of souls and rational minds and the concept of *harmonia* applied to the celestial hierarchy of angels. There is currently no complete English translation of Eriugena’s *Expositiones in Hierarchiam Caelestem*.<sup>107</sup>

To summarize the treatise, Pseudo-Dionysius explains all the divisions of angels in order of emanation from God to man; for him, the progression is as light streaming from its source. Specifically, there are three hierarchies: 1) Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones, 2) Lordships, Powers, and Authorities, and 3) Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. Through the course of his treatise, Pseudo-Dionysius also explains the reasons for these names and the striking appearances that angels take throughout the Bible.

Eriugena’s *Expositiones* have been transmitted in several incomplete manuscripts dating from the tenth through the fourteenth centuries; e.g., manuscripts exist with fragments of the text

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<sup>106</sup> Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus*, 50n.6.

<sup>107</sup> Eriugena’s Latin translation and commentary are published in a critical edition edited by J. Barbet, *Johannis Scoti Erivgenae Expositiones in Ierarchiam Coelestem*, CCCM, vol. 31 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975).

copied at the University of Paris during the thirteenth century.<sup>108</sup> Only one complete copy of the text exists, Douai, Bibliothèque municipale, 202, discovered, in 1950, by H. Dondaine.<sup>109</sup> The Douai manuscript (mid-twelfth century) contains about a quarter of the entire work unavailable elsewhere, most of Chapters 3–7.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> *Expositiones*, CCCM 31, xii.

<sup>109</sup> Paul Rorem, *Eriugena's Commentary on the Dionysian Celestial Hierarchy* (Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2005), x.

<sup>110</sup> *Expositiones*, CCCM 31, xii.

### CHAPTER 3

#### ERIUGENA'S *ANNOTATIONES IN MARCIANUM*

For the purposes of this dissertation, I have prepared an English translation of Eriugena's glosses over sections 1–30 in *De Nuptiis (DN)* Book I, using Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct.T.2.19; my translation is placed at the end of this chapter (cf., page 80).<sup>111</sup> Eriugena's excursus/treatise on the harmony of the spheres, titled *De Armonia Caelestium Motuum Siderumque Sonis*, is found in this portion of his glosses (cf., page 115), and his explanations there are vital to my discussion below. Interestingly, Eriugena's *De Armonia* is not present in the Paris manuscript described in Chapter 2 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Latin 12964), nor is this material addressed so extensively by Eriugena in his glosses over other sections of *DN* such as Books II and IX.

In his glosses, Eriugena meets our expectations for Carolingian commentary; i.e., he includes alternate readings, etymologies, and textual criticism, but his primary concern is the philosophical or metaphysical substance of Capella's text.<sup>112</sup> For example, Eriugena emphasizes Platonic questions about the soul and its integration with the moving celestial spheres, and, in these philosophical queries, he quotes at length from Calcidius and Macrobius. Teeuwen notes

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<sup>111</sup> Two partial English translations of Eriugena's excursus on the harmony of the spheres, inserted between his glosses over §15 and §16 in *De Nuptiis* Book I, are published separately by Godwin and Teeuwen. Both translations end before a fascinating study on how the soul's celestial journey maps onto those same moving spheres. Cf., Godwin, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth*, 104–8 and Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 219–26.

<sup>112</sup> Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 47.

that this “speculative, philosophical accent” to Eriugena’s comments on Capella was detected in the ninth century, but that it was not appreciated or emulated until the twelfth century.<sup>113</sup>

### **The Harmony of All Things**

Capella opens *DN* Book I with an evocation of Hymen, a god of love and presider over marriages:

Tu quem psallentem thalamis, quem matre Camena  
progenitum perhibent, copula sacra deum,  
semina qui arcanis stringens pugnantia vinclis  
complexuque sacro dissona nexa foves,  
namque elementa ligas vicibus mundumque maritas  
atque auram mentis corporibus socias,  
foedere complacito sub quo natura iugatur,  
sexus concilians et sub amore fidem<sup>114</sup>

Sacred principle of unity among the gods, on you I call; you are said to grace weddings with your song; it is said that a Muse was your mother. You bind the warring seeds of the world with secret bonds and encourage the union of opposites by your sacred embrace. You cause the elements to interact reciprocally, you make the world fertile; through you,

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<sup>113</sup> Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 47. For example, consider Prudentius’s criticism for Eriugena’s use of Capella, quoted above.

<sup>114</sup> James Willis, *Martianus Capella* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1983), 1.

Mind is breathed into bodies by a union of concord which rules over Nature, as you bring harmony between the sexes and foster loyalty by love.<sup>115</sup>

Here, Capella addresses a hymn to Hymen and mentions the role of music performed for and by him at weddings, how he fosters harmony and love between contrasting elements, anthropomorphized as male and female, and that he is the son of the Muse Calliope. His supposed connection to the Muses is important to Eriugena, who notes, “just as the harmony of all things is signified through the Muses, thus, through Hymen, [is signified] the general love of all things that joins all things.”<sup>116</sup> In describing Hymen as unifying “discordant elements,” Capella and Eriugena, who echoes him, are drawing upon a long tradition in Platonic philosophy; for example, in *Timaeus* 32C, Plato describes the cosmos as composed of four elements (earth, air, fire, water), from which all things are made through a process of proportional ordering. Following Plato, Capella and other Neoplatonists identified these processes of proportional ordering with musical terminology, in this case, *armonia*.

Eriugena’s comment that “the harmony of all things is signified through the Muses” (*per Musas armonia omnium rerum significatur*) should be noted carefully. The Muses are important characters in the *DN* story and especially in Book I. For example, the Muses attend Mercury in Apollo’s Grove (§11) and ascend with the gods as they venture seeking Jupiter’s approval for a marriage (§27). Additionally, in this grand ascent to the celestial court, each Muse stops at the planetary orbit with which she is associated and attuned, e.g., Melpomene, Muse of Tragedy, with the Sun’s orbit, and Calliope, Muse of Epic Poetry, with Mercury’s. Thalia, Muse of

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<sup>115</sup> Stahl, trans., *Martianus Capella*, 3.

<sup>116</sup> Unless otherwise stated, Eriugena’s glosses are excerpted here from my translation, placed at the end of this chapter.



Comedy, is left on Earth, perhaps as a comment on the superiority of the other literary domains over comedy.

superi autem globi orbesque septemplices suavis cuiusdam melodiae harmonicis  
tinnitibus concinebant ac sono ultra solitum dulciore, quippe Musas adventare  
praesenserant; quae quidem singillatim circulis quibusque metatis, ubi suae pulsum  
modulationis agnoverant, constiterunt. nam Uranie stellantis mundi sphaeram extimam  
continatur, quae acuto raptabatur sonora tinnitu, Polymnia Saturnium circulum tenuit,  
Euterpe Iovianam, Erato ingressa Martium modulatur, Melpomene medium, ubi Sol  
flammati mundum lumine convenustat, Terpsichore Venerio sociatur auro, Calliope  
orbem complexa Cyllenium, Clio citimum circulum, hoc est in Luna collocavit hospitium,  
quae quidem graves pulsus modis raucioribus personabat. sola vero, quod vector eius  
cycnus impatiens oneris atque etiam subvolandi alumna stagna petierat, Thalia derelicta  
in ipso florentis campi ubere residebat.<sup>117</sup>

The upper spheres and the seven planetary spheres produced a symphony of the  
harmonious notes of each, a sweeter song than usually heard; indeed, they had sensed the  
approach of the Muses, each of whom, after traversing the spheres, took her position  
where she recognized the pitch that was familiar to her. For Urania was attuned to the  
outermost sphere of the starry universe, which was swept along with a high pitch.  
Polymnia took over the sphere of Saturn; Euterpe controlled that of Jove; and Erato that  
of Mars, where she entered; while Melpomene held the middle region, where the Sun

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<sup>117</sup> Willis, *Martianus Capella*, 12-13.

enhanced the world with the light of flame. Terpsichore joined the golden Venus; Calliope embraced the Cyllenian's sphere; Clio set up as her lodging the innermost circle—that is, the moon's, whose deep pitch reverberated with deeper tones. Only Thalia was left sitting on earth's flowery bosom, because the swan which was to carry her was indisposed to carry its burden or even to fly upward and had gone to find the lakes which were its home.<sup>118</sup>

This picture of musical attunement and general coherence in the cosmos was a commonplace of Platonic thinking. Stated simply, basic patterns of the universe replicate themselves everywhere, physically, spiritually, and in all orders of magnitude, with music being the best analogy (cf., *Periphyseon* V, §966A), e.g., in the harmony of the spheres. While other musicological studies of Eriugena's writings have dealt almost exclusively with his description of the harmony of the spheres, e.g., in his *Annotationes* and in *Periphyseon*,<sup>119</sup> this project explores a fundamental element in Platonic thought neglected in previous discussions, i.e., music related to the spheres and the human soul. Eriugena's writings provide a perfect opportunity for such a study.

First, it should be noted that whereas Plotinus, like other students of Plato, studied the human soul in terms of the cosmos, Eriugena considered the cosmos in terms of the soul. For example, consider the following quotations from 1) Plotinus's *Enneads* IV and 2) Eriugena's *Periphyseon* II. For Plotinus, human souls and bodies, like everything else in our earthly

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<sup>118</sup> Stahl, trans., *Martianus Capella*, 16.

<sup>119</sup> E.g., Barbara Münxelhaus, "Aspekte der Musica Disciplina bei Eriugena," in *Jean Scot Érigène et l'histoire de la philosophie* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1977), 253–62.

experience, are derivative, lesser parts of a larger whole that manifest its order and movements.

In contrast, for Eriugena, the cosmos is inherent within the human soul.

1) We must admit, then, that each particular thing has an unreasoned power, since it is moulded and shaped in the All and in some way has a share of soul from the Whole which is ensouled, and is surrounded by a universe of this kind and is part of an ensouled being—for there is nothing in it which is not a part—but some things are more powerfully effective than others, both among the things on earth and still more among those in the heavens, since these have a clearer nature.<sup>120</sup>

2) Non enim ulla creatura est quae in homine intelligi non possit, unde etiam in sanctis scripturis omnis creatura nominari solet. In euangelio siquidem scriptum est: “Praedicate euangelium omni creaturae.” Item in Apostolo: “Omnis creatura congemiscit et dolet usque adhuc.” Et si non peccaret, non esset in eo diuisio sexuum sed solummodo homo esset; non separaretur in eo orbis terrarum a paradiso sed omnis terrena natura in eo esset paradisu, hoc est spiritualis conuersatio; caelum et terra in eo non segregarentur, totus enim caelestis esset et nil terrenum nil graue nil corporeum in eo appareret; esset enim et multiplicaretur in numerum a conditore sui praefinitum, sicut angeli et sunt et multiplicati sunt; sensibilis natura ab intelligibili in eo non discreparetur, totus enim esset intellectus creatori suo semper et immutabiliter adhaerens et nullo modo a primordialibus suis causis in quibus conditus est recederet; omnisque creatura quae in eo condita est nullam

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<sup>120</sup> Plotinus, *Enneads* IV, trans. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 255. Consider also *Enneads* II.9.7 and IV.4.35.

diuisionem in eo pateretur. Sed quoniam primus homo in tali felicitate permanere neglexerat et ab ea superbiendo cecidit et in infinitas partitiones uarietatesque naturae humanae unitas dispersa est, diuina clementia nouum hominem, in quo ipsa natura quae in ueteri homine dispertita est ad pristinam unitatem reuocaretur, in mundo nasci constituit.

For there is no creature that cannot be understood to be in man, whence in Holy Scripture he is customarily called “every creature.” Accordingly, in the Gospel, it is written, “Preach the gospel to every creature” [Mark 16:15], and, in the Apostle, “Every creature sighs deeply and suffers until now” [Romans 8:22]. And, if he had not sinned, there would not be in him the division of the sexes, but there would be only man; in him the earthly globe would not be separated from paradise, but in him the whole of earthly nature would be paradise—that is to speak spiritually. Heaven and Earth would not be separated in him, for he would be wholly heavenly, and nothing earthly, nothing heavy, nothing corporeal would appear in him; for he would be and would multiply to the number determined by his Creator, as the angels both are and have been multiplied. The sensible nature in him would not be distinct from the intelligible, for he would be all intellect, ever and immutably attached to his Creator and would by no means withdraw from his primordial causes, in which he was made; and no creature which is created in him would in him suffer any division. But, because the first man had despised to remain in such felicity and fell from it through pride, and the unity of human nature was dispersed into infinite divisions and variations, the divine clemency ordained that there

should be born a new Man in the world, in whom that nature which in the old man was divided should be recalled to pristine unity.<sup>121</sup>

Regardless of the fact that he preferred a different approach to other Neoplatonists, i.e., understanding the cosmos in terms of the soul, one can read what Eriugena had to say about music, the soul, or the general order of the cosmos and learn about the other two: the topics are mutually referential. This principle of interreferentiality in Eriugena's writings is thorny, though, and its consideration is best begun by revisiting the *organicum melos* question.

### **The *Organicum Melos* Question**

In his article, "Boethius, Eriugena, and the Neoplatonism of *Musica* and *Scolica enchiridis*," Raymond Erickson's primary aim was to deny any connection between Eriugena and the *Enchiridis* documents.<sup>122</sup> To summarize the situation, beginning with Edmond de Coussemaker in his *Mémoire sur Hucbald et sur ses traités de musique*, the term *organicum melos* was noted in both *Periphyseon* and *Musica enchiridis* and believed to reference polyphony in both instances.<sup>123</sup> This view was promoted by Jacques Handschin, who concluded that Eriugena therefore knew *Musica enchiridis*.<sup>124</sup> But later scholars, such as Ernst Waeltner, found that the term *organicum melos* also occurs without implying polyphony.<sup>125</sup> Following

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<sup>121</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Periphyseon* II, CCCM 162, 17 (PL122:536A–C).

<sup>122</sup> In *Musical Humanism and its Legacy: Essays in Honor of Claude V. Palisca*, ed. Nancy Baker and Barbara Hanning (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon, 1992), 53–78.

<sup>123</sup> Erickson, "Boethius," 57.

<sup>124</sup> Jacques Handschin, "Die Musikanschauung des Johannes Scotus (Eriugena)," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 5 (1927), 339.

<sup>125</sup> Ernst Waeltner, "Organicum Melos: Zur Musikanschauung des Iohannes Scottus (Eriugena)" (Munich: Bayerischen Akademie Der Wissenschaften, 1977).

Waeltner, Erickson noted that, properly defined, *organicus* “implies the presence of fixed mathematical ratios, such as are built into certain instruments (*organa*); these ratios are the foundation for both the harmony of the universe (as in Eriugena) and organal practice, based on the perfect consonances of the fourth and fifth (as in the *Enchiridis* treatises).”<sup>126</sup>

Although discrediting an overt connection between the *Enchiridis* documents and Eriugena, Waeltner and others left open the question of other influences. Nancy Phillips took up this question and expounded a reading in which Greek writings made available by Eriugena, in the ninth century, factored largely into the philosophy and even terminology of the *Enchiridis* treatises.<sup>127</sup> In contrast to Phillips, Erickson asserted that Boethius is the more likely source of Neoplatonic ideas in the *Enchiridis* documents. For example, although *Musica enchiridis* employs the term *resolutio* in a sense similar to Eriugena’s usage when referring to the eventual reunification of all creation with God, Erickson claimed that the term *resolutio* and “complementary notions of synthesis and analysis, the analogy between language and music, the concept of procession and return” can be found in Boethius’s *Arithmetic*.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Erickson, “Boethius,” 58. Mariken Teeuwen summarized her own view in the following: “The passage [in his commentary on Capella’s *DN*] in which John illustrates the harmony of the spheres with a choir singing different pitches simultaneously, *in choro, ubi multi simul cantantes*, is evidence for the existence of a polyphonic singing practice in the second half of the ninth century. John knew, from his own experience, of the practice of polyphonic singing. This does not, however, answer the question of whether, here or in *Periphyseon*, he refers to the specific technique of *organum*. There is, to my mind, no proof of the specific compositional technique in either of the two passages” (*Harmony of the Spheres*, 335).

<sup>127</sup> Nancy Phillips, “*Musica and Scolica Enchiridis*: The Literary, Theoretical, and Musical Sources” (PhD diss., New York University, 1984).

<sup>128</sup> Erickson, “Boethius,” 77.

Of course, Erickson focused on terminological issues: Do philosophical expressions appearing in *Musica* and *Scholica enchiridis* come from the writings of Eriugena or Boethius? Another enquiry, unexamined though worth consideration, is how philosophical terms and concepts play out in concert with ninth-century understandings of *musica*. Most scholars, including Erickson and Phillips, agree that Neoplatonic philosophy is prevalent throughout ninth-century music treatises, and, if anything, the *organicum melos* debates have established that a concept of proportional ordering appears in both musical and philosophical contexts. Moving forward, by expanding our understanding of the music of the spheres in Eriugena's writings to include the human soul, we should highlight such connections between philosophy and music, and underline the interdisciplinary nature of music in Eriugena's day.

### **The Music of the Spheres**

Between his comments on §15 and §16 of *DN* Book I, Eriugena inserted a short treatise titled “*DE ARMONIA CAELESTIUM MOTUUM SIDERUMQUE SONIS*” (“Concerning the Harmony of Heavenly Movements and the Sounds of the Stars”), his contribution to longstanding Platonic tradition of speculating on the harmony of the spheres. Ancient philosophers had discerned that certain “wanderers” (i.e., *πλανήτης*, hence our word, “planet”) moved in paths and at speeds divergent from the field of stars. Not accounting for the vast vacuum of space, these early thinkers supposed that the firmament and planets emitted sounds in their movements, and, since to human perception the Earth stands still, some thought that the

Earth was silent. Consequently, theorizing about the movements and music of the heavens became a preoccupation for scholars and a persistent intellectual pursuit through the centuries.<sup>129</sup>

Some likened the sounds of heaven to the lyre, itself a divine instrument associated with Apollo, and proposed tuning the cosmos in terms of an octave with different distances between specific planetary pitches or in terms of the velocity and size of each planet's orbit, e.g., Pliny's *Naturalis historia*, II.20:

Sed Pythagoras interdum ex musica ratione appellat tonum quantum absit a terra luna, ab ea ad Mercurium dimidium eius spatii, et ab eo ad Venerem tantundem, a qua ad solem sescuplum, a sole ad Martem tonum, id est quantum ad lunam a terra, ab eo ad Iovem dimidium, et ab eo a Saturnum dimidium, et inde sescuplum ad signiferum; ita septem tonis effici quam diapason harmoniam vocant, hoc est universitatem concentus; in ea Saturnum Dorio moveri phthongo, Iovem Phrygio, et in reliquis similia, iucunda magis quam necessaria subtilitate.

But, occasionally, Pythagoras draws on the theory of music, and he designates the distance between the Earth and the Moon as a whole tone, that between the Moon and Mercury a semitone, between Mercury and Venus the same, between her and the Sun a tone and a half, between the Sun and Mars a tone (the same as the distance between the Earth and the Moon), between Mars and Jupiter half a tone, between Jupiter and Saturn half a tone, between Saturn and the zodiac a tone and a half: the seven tones thus

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<sup>129</sup> Medieval scholars derived justification to theorize about the measurements of the cosmos from their beliefs about creation; for example, many quoted Wisdom of Solomon 11:20, "Thou hast ordered all things in measure and number and weight."



producing the so-called diapason, i.e., a universal harmony. In this, Saturn moves in the Dorian mode, Jupiter in the Phrygian, and similarly with the other planets—a refinement more entertaining than convincing.<sup>130</sup>

Capella himself presented a scalar model of the spheres in *DN* Book II, but that passage presents several problems for us today. In Stahl’s translation of Capella §169–§198, Philology and her entourage rise 126,000 stades, or one tone from Earth to the Moon, from the Moon to Mercury a half tone, from Mercury to Venus a half tone, from Venus to the Sun one and a half tones, from the Sun to Mars a half tone, from Mars to Jupiter a half tone, from Jupiter to Saturn a half tone, from Saturn to the Firmament a tone and a half.<sup>131</sup> In contrast to Pliny’s accounting, which equaled seven tones, Capella declares this total journey to be six tones, or one octave—but in Stahl’s reading the actual measurement is six and a half tones. In fact, a corruption in the Latin text obscures the true distance between Mars and Jupiter, which Capella states is the same as between Jupiter and Saturn.<sup>132</sup>

In addition to the scalar approach described above, other theorists speculated that the harmony of the spheres resembled the Perfect System of fixed notes defining tetrachords with moveable inner notes that specify genus (diatonic, chromatic, or enharmonic). This is the

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<sup>130</sup> Pliny, *Natural History*, Vol. 1, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 226-29.

<sup>131</sup> Stahl, *Martianus Capella*, 55–60.

<sup>132</sup> Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 197.

approach Eriugena employed, i.e., the heavenly music is organized conceptually as the Immutable System and produces an infinite variety of musical sounds.<sup>133</sup>

Turning to Eriugena's approach, then, it should be noted that his treatise on the harmony of the spheres lies inserted between his comments on §15 and §16 of Book I and not at the section of Book II mentioned above, in which Capella presents an octave model of the planets and their pitches. I propose that his choice was deliberate, for Eriugena's discussion appears to arise from this earlier portion in Book I, in which Capella describes the sacred and mysterious grove of Apollo, where Mercury must journey with Virtue, his traveling companion, beginning at §11. In fact, Eriugena's glosses for §11–§15, which I examine first, outline much of the material presented more fully in his treatise.

In §11, Mercury and Virtue approach Apollo's grove and see the scope of human history: empires rising and falling, human souls beginning and ending their earthly lives, and a "sweet music" arising from the trees—symbolizing the music of the spheres:

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<sup>133</sup> Cf., Atkinson, *The Critical Nexus*, 11–15. The Immutable System combined pitches defined in the tetrachords of the Greater Perfect System (two octaves, two pairs of conjunct tetrachords separated by a middle point of disjunction, fifteen pitches) and Lesser Perfect System (spanning an eleventh, three conjunct tetrachords, eleven pitches). Considered in terms of individual pitches, the two systems overlap, so when they are combined there are sixteen pitches; the B-flat from the Lesser Perfect System being the only new note. Considered in terms of tetrachords, the combined systems result in five tetrachords with the addition of the *synemmenon* and three new pitch designations: *trite synemmenon*, *paranete synemmenon*, and *nete synemmenon*. See also Gabriela Currie's "Concentum celi quis dormire faciet? Eriugenian Cosmic Song and Carolingian Planetary Astronomy," in *Quomodo Cantabimus Canticum?: Studies in Honor of Edward H. Roesner*, ed. David Cannata, et al. (Middleton: American Institute of Musicology, 2008), 19.

inter haec mira spectacula Fortunarumque cursus [motus] nemorum etiam susurrantibus flabris canora modulatio melico quodam crepitabat appulsu. nam eminentiora prolixarum arborum culmina perindeque distenta acuto sonitu resultabant; quicquid vero terrae confine ac propinquum ramis acclinibus fuerat, gravitas rauca quatiebat. at media ratis per annexa succentibus duplis ac susqualteris nec non etiam sesquiteritiis, <sesqui>octavis etiam sine discretione iuncturis, licet intervenirent limmata, concinebant. ita fiebat, ut nemus illud harmoniam totam superumque carmen modulationum congruentia personaret.<sup>134</sup>

Amidst these extraordinary scenes and these vicissitudes of Destinies, a sweet music arose from the trees, a melody arising from their contact as the breeze whispered through them; for the crests of the great trees were very tall and, because of this tension, reverberated with a sharp sound [*acuto sonitu*, i.e., a high pitch]; but, whatever was close to and near the ground, with drooping boughs, shook with a deep heaviness of sound [*gravitas rauca quatiebat*, i.e., the lowest pitch]; while the trees of middle size in their contacts with each other sang together in fixed harmonies of the duple, the sesquialtera, the sesquitertia also, and even the sesquioctava without discrimination, although semitones [*limmata*] came between. So it happened that the grove poured forth, with melodious harmony, the whole music and song of the gods.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Willis, *Martianus Capella*, 6–7.

<sup>135</sup> Stahl, trans., *Martianus Capella*, 9–10. Comments in brackets are my own.

The ratios arising from Apollo's trees (duple–2:1, sesquialtera–2:3, sesquitertia–3:4, and sesquioctava–9:8) are the basis of Pythagorean tuning, systematized in the famous series 12:9:8:6. But, remarkably, Eriugena moves in another direction and, in his commentary, applies a system of tetrachords to the sounding trees.

In omni musica quae cordis efficitur, tetracorda uel quina fiunt. Primum tetracordon uocatur principalis principalium, secundum subprincipalis principalium, tertium mediarum, quartum disiunctarum, quintum hyperboleon id est excellentium. In primo ergo tetracordon grauitas uocum fit, in ultimo autem acuitas, et quicquid in medio mixtura quaedam est inter grauitatem et acutum. Inde dicit in sequentibus: *media ratis*, id est media arboris.

In all music that is made on strings, fourths and fifths arise. The first tetrachord is called *principalis principalium*, the second [tetrachord is called] *subprincipalis principalium*, the third *mediarum*, the fourth *disiunctarum*, the fifth *hyperboleon*, that is, *excellentium*. Therefore, in the first tetrachord the lowest voice is made, but in the last [tetrachord] is the highest, and whatever is in the middle is some kind of mixture between low and high. Therefore, he says in the following, *media ratis* [middle of the raft] that is, in the middle of the tree.

Next, Eriugena alludes to the fact that he understands the term “tone” (*tonus*) to refer to shifting proportional relationships between the planets and not as if they were at fixed distances

from each other; he takes up this topic more fully in his treatise discussed below. Eriugena then affirms that in his conception the music of the spheres spans two octaves.<sup>136</sup>

Though not mentioned specifically, it appears that the two octaves of the Immutable System are what Eriugena had in mind, but with a few oddities. 1) In the passage quoted above, Eriugena names the tetrachords *principalis principalium*, *subprincipalis principalium*, *mediarum*, *disiunctarum*, and *hyperboleon* or *excellentium*, but these designations do not align with Capella's description of the tetrachords in *DN IX* (§961) or Boethius's in *DIM I.25* and *IV.3*. Capella labels the tetrachords as *principalium*, *mediarum*, *coniunctarum*, *separatarum*, and *excellentium*, and Boethius, quoting Albinus, lists them as *principalium*, *mediarum*, *coniunctarum*, *disiunctarum* (*divisarum* at *DIM IV.3*), and *excellentium*. 2) Eriugena used the string names *principalis principalium* and *subprincipalis principalium* (*hypate hypaton* and *parhypate hypaton*) to refer to the first two tetrachords. 3) He named the *disiunctarum* (*diezeugmenon*) tetrachord, but not the *synemmenon*.

Despite the peculiarities in how he names these tetrachords, it must be remembered, with significance for the following, that in the Immutable System the central string, the *mese*, occupies a central placement in the system considered as a whole as well as dynamically within the different octave species. To this point, the following is a gloss from the so-called Anonymous Commentary on Capella's *De Nuptiis*:

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<sup>136</sup> Cf., Gabriela Currie, "Concentum celi quis dormire faciet? Eriugenian Cosmic Song and Carolingian Planetary Astronomy," in *Quomodo Cantabimus Canticum?: Studies in Honor of Edward H. Roesner*, ed. David Cannata, et al. (Middleton: American Institute of Musicology, 2008). Currie writes, "Eriugena generates, for the first time in the history of medieval re-evaluations of the Neoplatonic music of the spheres, a two-octave cosmic span with the Sun in the middle, functioning as the *mese*. It becomes the unifying element for all Eriugenian discussion of cosmic music . . ." (30).

*OCTAVUS MECH Usque mece sunt grave[s] soni, a mece autem acuti sunt soni.*

*Octavus Mech* [Octave Mese]: All the way to the *mese* the pitches are low, but from the *mese* the pitches are high.<sup>137</sup>

Remembering that *media* is Capella's translation of *mese* (§931), it suggests that Eriugena means that the various tetrachords are definitively bound in relation to, or "lashed" around, the central log of the entire "raft," i.e., the *media* in Eriugena's gloss for *DN* §11 (*media ratis*). More importantly, the significance of the *mese* is observed in the act of tuning a monochord in order to make audible the intellectually discerned pitches of the Immutable System. The *mese* is the first pitch established at a ratio of 2:1, and, beginning with this one pitch, the entire array of other pitches is established (cf., Boethius's *DIM* IV.5).<sup>138</sup> Therefore, it is important to note that Eriugena identifies the Sun as *mese* in his glosses on §11:

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<sup>137</sup> MacInnis, trans., Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 493. The so-called Anonymous commentary of glosses on Capella's *DN* is considered to be the oldest from the Carolingian era. This gloss tradition is the special concern of Mariken Teeuwen's *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres* in which she presents a critical edition of these glosses over *DN* Books I, II, and IX.

<sup>138</sup> Boethius, *De institutione musica*, trans. Calvin Bower (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 126ff. "Divide AB into four parts with three points: C, D, and E. Therefore the total, AB, will be the duple of DB and AD, and AD and DB will each be duples of AC, CD, DE, and EB. Thus AB will be the lowest (the *proslambanomenos*), and DB the *mese*, for it is half the total length, and as AB is double the length of DB, DB is twice as high as AB. For, as was discussed above, the relationship of length and pitch is always reversed; to the degree that a string is higher, it will be shorter" (128).

*Lymmata*, id est emitonia. Hoc dicit quia a Sole usque ad Lunam quidam tonos integros dicunt. Iterum a Sole usque ad Saturnum toni etiam integri dicuntur. Inde conficitur ut Sol mise, id est medium locum teneat.

*Lymmata*, that is, a semitone [*emitonia*]. He says this, because some say the tones from the Sun to the Moon are whole [*tonos integros*]. Again, the tones from the Sun to Saturn are said to be whole. Thence, it turns out that the Sun is the *mese*, that is, it keeps a middle place [*locum*, i.e., orbit].

Before proceeding, some observations should be made concerning ninth-century considerations of the positioning of the planets and the nature of their orbits. Bruce Eastwood argues forcefully that Eriugena drew on Pliny's *Naturalis historia*, a document well known during the ninth century, and that he did not advance any sort of heliocentrism.<sup>139</sup> Rather, those passages in Eriugena's writings that seem to present heliocentrism should be interpreted as an attempt by Eriugena, the great consolidator of systems, simultaneously to acknowledge philosophical beliefs of the Sun as a central, divine intelligence and Capella's actual text, which does present a limited heliocentrism.<sup>140</sup> In Pliny, Eriugena would have found a description of planetary orbits about an eccentric Earth (i.e., the center of the Earth is displaced from the center

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<sup>139</sup> Bruce Eastwood, "Johannes Scottus Eriugena, Sun-Centered Planets, and Carolingian Astronomy," *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 32, 4 (2001): 314.

<sup>140</sup> Eastwood, "Johannes Scottus," 298.

of the planetary orbits), and this model would have satisfactorily accounted for his own observations of the night sky.<sup>141</sup>

In §12 and §13, Mercury explains to Virtue that hearing the celestial music in Apollo's grove makes sense, since all the spheres of the cosmos are modulated (*moduletur*) by the Sun. Mercury then shows Virtue seven rivers (beginning in §14) that they must cross and that also symbolize the planetary orbits. These multicolored rivers are presented in the following order: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, and Moon. In describing these rivers, Capella pays special attention to Venus, over which human souls seem to obsess:

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<sup>141</sup> It should be noted that other scholars do not share Eastwood's view (e.g., Jeauneau, cf., Eastwood, "Johannes Scottus," 314n.5); i.e., they read the following lines from Eriugena's *Periphyseon* literally: "But the planets which revolve about it [i.e., the Sun] change their colors in accordance with the qualities of the regions they are traversing, I mean Jupiter and Mars, Venus and Mercury, which always pursue their orbits around the Sun, as Plato teaches in the *Timaeus*; and therefore when they are above the Sun they show a bright face, but when below a ruddy face" (Sheldon-Williams, trans., *Periphyseon* III, *SLH* 11, 207). (Planetae uero quae circa eum uoluuntur mutant colores secundum qualitates spatiorum in quibus discurrunt, Iouem dico et Martem, Venerem et Mercurium. Quae semper circulos suos circa solem peragunt, sicut Plato in *Timaeo* edocet; atque ideo dum supra solem sunt, claros ostendunt uultus, dum uero infra rubeos; *Periphyseon* III, *CCCM* 163, 113, *PL*122:698A.) Eastwood's point is that, if Eriugena literally asserted that these four planets circled the Sun, it would have met with loud disagreement in the ninth century (which it did not) and contradict Plato's actual text in *Timaeus*—as well as any careful observation of the night sky. While acknowledging Erickson's compelling arguments, it is curious to note that in his comments on *DN* §8 (translated below), Eriugena wrote: "Venus uero et Mercurius non ambiunt terram sicut tres planetae qua sunt supra Solem, sed circa Solem habent circulos."



verum interior illo electro purior resplendebat amnis, quem praeter ceteros Fortunarum ille consistens populus appetebat, quarum alias eius odor et halatus illexerat, alias lenis undae canori permulsere modulatus; gustum autem haustumque quamplures ex eodem dulcissimo gurgite sitiebant. nec deerant, qui eadem foveri abluique lymphā ac se in illam iacere cupiebant.<sup>142</sup>

Within shone a river purer than amber, with a crowd of people standing beside it who desired this more than the other rivers of the Destinies [*Fortunarum*]; some of these people were allured by its fragrant perfume; others were charmed by the sound of gentle melody from its waves. Many were thirsting to taste a drink of its delicious stream, while some people wanted the water to bathe and sooth themselves and to be immersed in it.<sup>143</sup>

For Capella, the individual and corporate destinies of humans are connected to the movements of the planets symbolized in these multicolored rivers; in §15, he wrote,

Hi igitur cursus discoloris amnes praedictas rerum nationumque Fortunas immensis primo sinibus ambiebant. tunc diversa undarum violensque rapiditas singulas quasque pervadens improvisa vi per declivis alvei praecipites lapsus rapidis turbinibus pertrahebat, ita ut alius easdem plerumque alteri transfunderet fluvio . . .<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Willis, *Martianus Capella*, 7–8.

<sup>143</sup> Stahl, trans., *Martianus Capella*, 10–11.

<sup>144</sup> Willis, *Martianus Capella*, 8.

These streams of variegated hue encircled [*ambiebant*] the aforementioned Destinies of events and of nations with windings at first immense. But then the different speeds and rushing force of the waves, lapping each Destiny with surprising violence, dragged them headlong downward with rapid eddies; one stream would often pour them into another . . .<sup>145</sup>

In a way that similarly connects souls and planets, it is striking that in his comments over this section Eriugena twice glossed the word *ambiebant*, once in reference to the orbits of the planets and then referring to human souls. He noted that Platonic doctrine holds that souls move between Heaven and Earth and meet both good and ill along the way:

*Immensis finibus*: propter immensitatem dicit. Propter hoc dicit quia MARCUS TVLLIVS in Somnio Scipionis dicit quod omnes animae descendunt de caelo, et unaquaque anima habet suam fortunam, et in illo loco discendunt ubi signum Leonis est. Primo enim descendunt in circulum Saturni, et hoc est primum malum propter frigiditatem terrae. Deinde in circulum Iouis: ibi temperiem quandam accipiunt propter temperantiam, quia Iouis dicitur salutaris in omnia. Inde ad Martem: ibi etiam accipiunt quasi malum propter furorem et maximum calorem eius. Inde ad Solem: ibi quaedam requies fit propter ingenium; est enim Sol quasi anima mundi.

*Immensis finibus* [By immeasurable boundaries]: [Capella] says this because of [their, i.e., the planetary orbits'] immensity. He says this because Marcus Tullius [Cicero], in *The*

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<sup>145</sup> Stahl, trans., *Martianus Capella*, 11.

*Dream of Scipio*, says that all souls descend from Heaven, and every single soul has its own fate, and they descend at the constellation Leo [*ubi signum Leonis est*]. First, they descend into the orbit of Saturn, and this is the first misfortune because of the coldness of the region [*terrae*]. Then, in the orbit of Jupiter, they receive a certain tempering because of moderation, because Jupiter is said to be the salvation of all. Then, [they descend] to Mars; there they receive, as it were, evil, because of its fury and extreme heat. Then, to the Sun; there is a certain rest because of [its] nature. Indeed, the Sun is just as the World Soul [*anima mundi*].

After an earthly death, these souls must then ascend back to Heaven, traversing the same celestial path; some souls make it, while others are lost, forever caught in “the lower regions.” And it is with this mention of the plight of souls transmigrating the sounding spheres that Eriugena inserted his harmonic treatise, “Concerning the Harmony of Heavenly Movements and the Sounds of the Stars.”

### **Concerning the Harmony of Heavenly Movements and the Sounds of the Stars**

Eriugena’s treatise begins by dividing the heavens into two octaves. The lowest pitch is produced by Saturn, the highest by the Firmament; the Sun stands in the middle as the *mese*. Specifically, there are eight pitches produced by the seven planets and the Firmament. These pitches are determined by speed, length of orbit, and, in the case of the planets, their relation to the whirling Firmament. Eriugena states that the pitches rise between Saturn and the moon (the

opposite of Capella's description in *DN* Book II) and that those planets below the Sun strain upwards toward those sounds that are higher in terms of placement.<sup>146</sup>

Eriugena makes the notable assertion that it is “not the positioning of the planets, but the proportional ratio of the pitches [that] produces the heavenly harmony,”<sup>147</sup> and he explains 1) why this understanding is significant and 2) possible sources of confusion. Using the Sun and Saturn as an example, he clarifies that depending on their placement in relation to each other, not their position above the Earth, these planets can bring forth an octave, a fifth, and a fourth. Said another way, as the Sun and Saturn approach each other in their courses, the harmony between them will change. Eriugena claimed that once this principle is grasped, one may believe “that in the eight sounds of the heavens all possible musical consonances can be made—not only through the three genera, I mean the diatonic, chromatic, and enharmonic, but, likewise, even in others, [i.e., other genera,] which are beyond all mortal reasoning.”<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> “Moreover, [the planets] located under the Sun stretch toward the higher sounds, because they are both farther from the speed of the sphere and run in shorter orbits in the heavens.” (Quae autem sub Sole localiter, quoniam et longius a spherica uelocitate distant et in breuioribus mundi spatiis discurrunt, acutiores sonos extendunt.)

<sup>147</sup> The full sentence reads as follows: “And, through this, not the positioning of the planets, but the proportional ratio of the pitches produces the heavenly harmony, particularly since this ratio does not depend upon the position ascending and descending in the cosmos.” (Ac per hoc, non locorum positio sed proportionis sonorum ratio caelestem efficit armoniam, presertim cum non sinat ratio sursum et deorsum localiter in uniuerso.)

<sup>148</sup> Ac per hoc, in octo caelestibus sonis omnes musicas consonantias fieri posse credendum est, non tantum per tria genera, diatonicum, dico, chrommaticum, enarmonicum, uerum etiam in aliis ultra omnium mortalium ratiocinationem.

Eriugena discerned that confusions in terminology were a hurdle to be overcome in understanding his presentation. In the next section, he took up the term *tonus* and explained its interpretive possibilities:

Et notandum quod illi toni qui a terra computantur ad spheram, uerbi gratia, a terra ad Lunam tonus, non sint in proportionibus uocum, sed in interuallis locorum. Tonorum enim multae species sunt. Siquidem toni sunt interualla siderum, hoc est, quantum distat unumquodque ab alio quantumque Luna elongatur a terra: qui toni pro diuersitate absidarum et circulorum uariantur. Quam speciem tonorum MARTIANVS diffinit dicens: “Tonus est spatium cum legitima quantitate.” Quae species in musica diastema uocatur. Sunt toni temporum, in longitudine et breuitate constituti. Sunt toni spirituum in spissitudine et exilitate uocum. Sunt toni armonici, de quibus nunc agitur, in grauitate et altitudine sonorum, ex quibus omnis proportionalitas simfoniarum constituitur.

And it should be noted that these tones [*toni*, i.e., considered as distances], which are calculated from the Earth to the Sphere, e.g., the tone [*tonus*] from Earth to the Moon, may not be in the ratios of the pitches [*in proportionibus uocum*], but in the distances of their positions. For there are many kinds of tones. Accordingly, tones [*tonorum*] are distances between the stars, i.e., how far each [planet] is apart from another and how far the Moon is removed from the Earth. [These] tones [*tonorum*] vary according to the diversities of [the planets’] arcs and orbits. It is this kind of tones [*tonorum*] that Martianus defines, saying, “A tone [*tonus*] is a distance with a measure, determined by rule.” This kind [of tone] is called “interval” [*diastema*] in music. [Alternately,] there are

tones of time [*toni temporum*], arranged in long or short duration. There are tones of breath [*toni spirituum*], defined in density or sparseness of sounds [*uocum*]. [And] there are tones of harmonies [*toni armonici*], which are now under discussion [*de quibus nunc agitur*], defined in lowness and highness of sounds, of which each proportion of consonances [*omnis proportionalitas simfoniarum*] is composed.

In this discussion, Eriugena initially explains Capella's use of the term *tonus* in a way that would encompass one sense of *modus*, as a specific set of pitches and intervals, though what mattered for Eriugena were the proportional relationships at play within the entire moving system, the "tones of harmonies" and not specific pitches applied to each planet.<sup>149</sup> As an example, Eriugena pointed to the organ. The placement of any particular organ pipe makes no difference for the proportional relationships between all the pipes considered as a system. In another analogy, this time to a choir of vocalists, Eriugena summarized all of the preceding argument:

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<sup>149</sup> Cf., Barbara Münxelhaus, "Aspekte Der Musica Disciplina Bei Eriugena," in *Jean Scot Érigène et l'Histoire de la Philosophie* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1977), 262. Münxelhaus summarizes the exceptional nature of Eriugena's presentation thus: "Damit geht Eriugena über die traditionellen Systeme der Planetenskalen, die in ihrer Intervallfolge festgelegt sind, weit hinaus. Weder vor Eriugena noch nach ihm sind mir Systeme der Sphärenharmonie bekannt, die von einer festgelegten Planetenskala abgehen und in dieser erstaunlichen Konsequenz zu einem grundsätzlich variablen System führen." (Thus, Eriugena goes far beyond the traditional systems of planetary scales that are defined in their interval sequence. Neither before Eriugena nor after him are systems for the harmony of the spheres known to me that deviate from a fixed planetary scale and lead in this amazing consequence to a fundamentally variable system.)

Vtatur ergo exemplo quodam quo manifestius appareat quod conamur asserere. In choro, ubi multi simul cantantes consonant, non locus in quo unusquisque constituitur sed proportio suae uocis consideratur. In quocunque enim loco fuerit qui grauissimam uocem emittit, necesse est grauissimam uocum omnium proportionem optineat. Eadem ratione, ubicunque in choro sit qui acutissimam uocem profert, necessario sonorum omnium acumen tenebit. De succinentibus similiter intelligendum, quorum non localis positio sed proportionalis uociferatio in uniuersitate modulaminis diiudicatur. Frustra igitur localium interuallorum rationibus caelestem musicam coartari arbitrantur. In quo nihil aliud conspicitur nisi grauitatis et acuminis ascensus atque descensus.

Now, let us use a certain example so that it may be clearly evident what we are trying to assert. In a choir where many singers sing together simultaneously, the place where each [singer] is situated is not considered, rather, the proportional relationship of his sounding voice [to the others]. For, wherever the person who sings the lowest pitch will have been positioned, it is necessary that he should maintain the lowest ratio of all pitches [*uocum*]. By the same reasoning, wherever in the choir might be the one who sings [*profert*] the highest pitch, he necessarily will hold the highest of all pitches [*sonorum*].

Accompanying voices [*succinentibus*] should be similarly understood; of which, not the placed position, but the proportional relationship between the voices [*proportionalis uociferatio*] is distinguished in the whole of the melody. Therefore, in vain, one considers the heavenly music to be constrained by the ratios of local intervallic distances [*localium interuallorum rationibus*], in which nothing else is seen except the ascent and descent of lowness and highness.

Here, after such a fascinating and challenging discussion, previous scholars have ended their considerations of Eriugena and the harmony of the spheres.<sup>150</sup> Examining the context for Eriugena's treatise suggests that more should be said, though. I have already mentioned that this treatise is inserted immediately after Eriugena twice glosses the verb *ambio* in two separate senses: *ambio* applied to planets and souls. The treatise now continues specifically on the topic of souls:

Sectam platoniam antiquissimorum Grecorum de lapsu et apostrophia animarum. Qui ueluti omnes animas simul conditas ante corpora terrena in celestibus stellarum aditis delirantur, quae uelocitatem caelestis sphaerae non ualentes nec uolentes consequi, tarditatem uero Saturni eligentes, primo de celestibus sedibus in Saturni ambitum lapsae sunt, deinde inchoantes cadere nulla ratione retineri ualentes, per diuersos planetarum circulos usque ad terrena corpora cadere compulsae sunt, in quibus delictorum diuersis sordibus pollutae iterum ab eis resolui coguntur et ad inferna descendere, hoc est ad illam uitam quae carnis mortem sequitur.

[The following is according to] the Platonic sect of the most ancient Greeks concerning the fall and returning [*apostrophia*] of souls, who, as with all souls simultaneously created before earthly bodies, are led astray, having been deceived in the starry heavens [*in celestibus stellarum aditis delirantur*]. Being neither strong enough nor willing to follow the speed of the celestial sphere, they choose the slowness of Saturn. First, down

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<sup>150</sup> By which, I mean that other scholars have not incorporated Eriugena's subsequent discussions of the soul when explaining Eriugena's account of the harmony of the spheres, e.g., Münxelhaus, "Aspekte der Musica Disciplina."



from the celestial seats they fall into the revolutions of Saturn, and from there, beginning to fall and without reason strong enough to hold them, they are impelled to fall through the various orbits of the planets all the way to earthly bodies, in which, by diverse sins and polluted by filth, they are forced again to be loosened and to descend to the lower regions, i.e., to that life which follows the death of the flesh.

Sin is the obstacle that keeps these souls from regaining Heaven, and apotheosis (a.k.a. deification or theosis) is needed (remembering that Eriugena understood apotheosis as the final and complete union of elect souls with God).<sup>151</sup> Eriugena's treatise on the harmony of the spheres ends with the following:

Quoniam uero corporalibus maculis pollutae sine purgatione quam ΑΠΟΘΕΩCΙΝ appellabant, id est redificationem, quoniam primo in unitate diuinitati adhaerebant, ut putabant, ad quam purgatae reuertebantur, illuc peruenire non poterant, in ipsis planetarum meatibus purgari estimabant, et quia aetheria spatia non eiusdem qualitatis sunt, quaedam quidem frigida, quaedam uero ardentia, quaedam temperata dicuntur esse, pro qualitate meritorum singulas singulis deputabant. Et meatum quidem Saturni Stigem uocabant, hoc est tristitiam: inde alludit MARTIANVS dicens "mestissimum deorum" Saturnum, propter nimietatem frigoris, quae Solis longinquitate et cursus tarditate nascitur. Martis uero meatum ΠΥΡΦΛΗΓΕΤΟΝ uocabant, hoc est ignem flammantem. In quibus duobus meatibus impias animas aut semper torqueri si nimiae nequitiae forent, aut purgari ut ad quietem quandam possent redire. Quam quietem in meatu Iouis et Veneris

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<sup>151</sup> Cf., *Periphyseon* V, PL122:935C-D.

esse putabant, in quibus EAYCEOC, hoc est solutionis ex poenis campos esse putabant. Quoniam uero amoris corporum, quibus nascentibus adiunctae sunt neque in purgationibus neque in quietibus oblatae sunt, etiam purgatae redire iterum ad corpora quaedam quidem appetunt, quaedam uero spretis omnino corporibus suas naturaliter adeunt stellas, uidelicet ex quibus lapsae sunt. Ideoque ait quasdam ad ripas redditas, hoc est ad pristinum statum, quasdam uero corporibus omnino liberari. Animarum autem liberam examinationem, qua deliberant utrum ad corpora reuersurae sunt an, omni corporea habitatione spreta, ad sedes pristinas reuersurae, per alteram furtunarum de amne in amnem et reciprocum de flumine ad flumen reditum significat. Non potuit enim liuida unda, ut ipse ait, eas retinere. Tanta siquidem libertatis est humana anima ut, si uelit in miseria manere, maneat, sin in sua cinceritate permaneat. Sat est de humanarum cogitationum miseria deque infidelium machinamentis.

[Souls] are unable to reach [their former placement] without the purification called ἀποθέωσις [i.e., apotheosis], i.e., redeification, because of the corporeal stains of pollution. [The Ancient Greeks] believed that [as souls] cling first to divinity in [indivisible] unity, [there they should] return, after having been cleansed, [but stained souls] are unable to make it back. It is in these pathways of the planets [that the Greeks] believed souls to be cleansed. Since the ethereal spaces are not of the same nature, indeed, some are said to be cold, some fiery hot, some temperate, they assigned each one [i.e., souls] individually a place according to their own merits. The pathway of Saturn is called the river Styx; this is sadness, to which Martianus alludes calling Saturn the “most unhappy of the gods,” because of its excess of cold, which comes about due to its

distance from the Sun and the slowness of its orbit. The pathway of Mars is called πυριφλεγέθων, i.e., fire inflaming. In these two pathways [i.e., Saturn and Mars], wicked spirits are either always to be tormented, if they had been excessively wicked, or to be cleansed, and so are able to return to a certain respite [*quietem*]. This respite was believed to be in the pathway of Jupiter and Venus, in which are the Elysian fields [i.e., Ἠλύσιον πεδίον], this is what they thought to be the plains for the relaxation from penalty. But, because of love of the flesh, to which they have been yoked from birth, these souls are neither in the state of purifications nor in the forgetful rest of those having been cleansed, rather, and seek to return again to a body. [On the other hand,] some [souls] completely despise their bodies and naturally approach the stars from which they evidently had fallen. Therefore, he [i.e., Capella] says, some [souls] are restored to the shores, that is, to a former state, some to be entirely freed from bodies. Moreover, the free balance of souls, by which it is considered whether they are going to return to bodies or, having scorned all fleshly lodging, to return to their former seat, is signified through one of the destinies [i.e., *fortunarum*] moving out of and returning to various streams. Indeed, not even a malicious wave could restrain them, as he himself said. So great is the freedom of the human soul that if it should wish to remain in misery, it remains, [and, contrariwise,] if in its integrity [*cinceritate*] it should persevere. So much is sufficient [to say] concerning the misery of human thinking and concerning the machinations of the unfaithful.

Eriugena's insistence on "the free balance of souls" (*animarum autem liberam examinationem*) is interesting to note, considering his participation in the predestination controversies of the ninth century. But, more to the point, it seems that as Eriugena preferred a

more complex understanding of the tones between planets (proportion in reference to the Sun vs. fixed intervals), so he articulated an approach that considered the soul's journey through the heavens to be more than a journey from point A to point B. Stated simply, his aim in these glosses was to expound a comprehensive understanding of the soul, that it must regulate itself carefully in pursuit of deification.

At this point, one observes the brilliance in Eriugena's presentation. For, as human intellect cultivated in the liberal arts understands musical proportions and modulates music well,<sup>152</sup> the cosmos has a proportional ordering considered in reference to the central, modulating Sun (standing for divine intelligence), and, just so, the soul (metaphorically journeying through the heavens) necessitates an appropriate ordering, guided by intellect, fortified by moral strength, and undistracted by base sensuality.

### **Music, Soul, and Cosmos**

To add to the foregoing consideration of music, soul, and cosmos and as a conclusion to this chapter, I will discuss Eriugena's glosses over *DN* §7. In §7, Mercury considers Psyche, the human soul, as a potential bride. Her beauty and education, as well as the divine favor shown her, all commend Psyche as an outstanding candidate. Capella described her as the daughter of the Sun and Aristotle's *Entelechia*; thus, she symbolizes the realization or actuality of divine potentiality (the fiery Sun was considered the primary, creative element).<sup>153</sup> Eriugena made Neoplatonic doctrine more explicit at this point; he noted that, in this reading, the Sun stands in for the Divine Intelligence or *Nous* and, glossing *speculum*, wrote that the soul participates in a Neoplatonic progression:

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<sup>152</sup> Here, I am using Augustine's (as well as Censorinus's and Cassiodorus's) definition of *musica* as *scientia bene modulandi*, i.e., *modulatio*, from *modus*, the application of measure.

<sup>153</sup> Stahl, *Martianus Capella*, 6n.16.

Per *speculum* significatur origo animae, ut sciat qua origine est creata, id est a sapientia ad intelligentiam et postea ad animam.

By *speculum* [mirror] is signified the origin of the soul, so that it knows from what source it was created, that is, from wisdom to intelligence and afterwards to soul.

Capella writes that, at her birth, Psyche was given many divine presents; for example, she received Eternity's diadem from Jupiter, the veil and breast-band of Athena, prophetic insight and astrological discernment from Apollo, and, from Urania (Muse of Astronomy), a mirror (*speculum*, glossed above) "in which Psyche could recognize herself and learn her origins." Capella described her gifts from Aphrodite and Mercury as follows, in §7:

omnes vero illecebras circa sensus cunctos apposuit Aphrodite; nam et unguentis oblitam floribusque redimitam halatu pasci foverique docuerat et melle permulserat et auro et monilibus inhiare membraque vinciri honorationis celsae affectatione persuaserat. tunc crepitacula tinnitusque, quis infanti somnum duceret, adhibebat quiescenti. praeterea ne ullum tempus sine illecebra oblectamentisque decurreret, pruritui subscalpentem circa ima corporis apposuerat voluptatem. sed vehiculum ei ac volatiles rotas, quis mira posset celeritate discurrere, tradiderat ipse Cyllenius, licet eam auri compedibus illigatam Memoria praegravarit.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Willis, *Martianus Capella*, 6–7.

Aphrodite had given to all her senses every kind of pleasure; she had spread ointment on Psyche, garlanded her with flowers, taught her to appreciate and enjoy perfume and to delight in the sweetness of honey. Also, she implanted in her a desire for gold and jewelry and a taste for wearing rich ornament. When she rested, Aphrodite brought her rattles and bells with which one lulls a baby to sleep; then, to make sure that she was never without amusement and delectation, Aphrodite assigned Pleasure to stimulate desire in her by intimate titillation. The Cyllenian [Mercury] himself gave her a vehicle with swift wheels in which she could travel at an astonishing speed, although Memory bound it and weighed it down with golden chains.<sup>155</sup>

Eriugena read Mercury's gift of a vehicle positively as the soul's natural swiftness, but he read the chains of Memory as holding it back in a negative sense. Aphrodite's gifts are more complicated. Recalling the previously discussed portion of *DN*, in which human souls pay undue attention to the stream symbolizing Venus, one must keep in mind that to Platonic thought sensual, earthly pleasures were distractors for the soul, which should rather orient itself upward by intellect and reason. Accordingly, Eriugena called all Aphrodite's gifts "the contaminations and allurements of this life," e.g., Aphrodite's musical instruments lull Psyche to sleep. As any Platonist would, in answer to the problem of Memory's chains and the sensual distractions of earthly existence, Eriugena urges moral strength:

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<sup>155</sup> Stahl, trans., *Martianus Capella*, 7.

Per *ueiculum* uelocitas ingenii significatur. Abstulit omnem tarditatem ab anima. Per ‘compedes’ significatur memoria quae custodit quaedam ex animi uelocitate. Sed est uirtus suadendi, uirtus intelligentiae, uirtus conceptionis animi.

*Ueiculum* [i.e., *Vehiculum*, vehicle] signifies a natural swiftness. It removes all slowness from the soul. Memory is signified by *compedes* [chains], which restrain things from the swiftness of the mind. But moral strength [*uirtus*] is to be urged—the strength of intelligence, the strength of the concept of the soul.

Therefore, Eriugena, following Capella, maps the soul’s journey onto the cosmic system as an analogy for deification. That is, Eriugena described how, by avoiding the charms of earthly existence (symbolized by Venus) and through self-regulation via intellect (symbolized by the Sun), the soul, by moral development, strains toward God. This analogy plays out also in how, as Eriugena had said, the planets below the Sun strain upward towards the Firmament, and, similarly, the human soul strains toward God. To this point, Eriugena’s gloss from §15 before his treatise on the harmony of the spheres is relevant:

*Decliuus aluei*, quasi ad uallem descendentes. Omnes animae rationabiles, quantum ad Deum pertinent et ad Deum intendunt, sine contagione sunt. Quando uero ad inferiora descendunt et corpora uel corporibus adhaerentia diligunt, uitiis ex natura corporum assumptis adgrauantur. Et iterum, cum damnantur, redeunt in caelum quasi penitentia ducti et per eosdem circulos planetarum ascendunt, et ibi bona et mala inueniunt sicuti

cum descendentes inuenerunt, et postea quasi ex carcere redeunt et uertuntur in stellas,  
aut etiam in inferno remanent.

*Decliuus aluei* [Slope of a trench], as if descending to a valley. All rational spirits, as long as they reach and strain after God, are without infection. When they descend to lower places and desire bodies or sticking to bodies, they are weighed down, having assumed vices from fleshly nature. Likewise, when they are condemned, they return into heaven, as if having been led by penitence, and through the same orbits of the planets they ascend, finding good and evil, just as they found when they descended. In the end, they return as if from prison and turn [*uertuntur*] among the stars or remain in the lower region.

In his interpretation of theosis by way of a cosmic analogy, we may observe another example of Eriugena relating the cosmos to the human soul (and not vice versa, as with other Neoplatonists). And more examples of this principle may be found. For example, Eriugena's lengthiest discussions of the soul, again bound together with harmonic analogies and the cosmos, appear in *Periphyseon*, to which he added complex theologies, such as theophany, his own Hexameron, and explanations for the nature of man.

**Translation of Eriugena's *Annotationes In Marcianum*, I:1-30 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct.T.2.19)**

Below, I have listed in three columns 1) the section numbers of *DN*, 2) Eriugena's Latin glosses as published by Jeaneau,<sup>156</sup> and 3) my English translation. The standard section

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<sup>156</sup> Eduard Jeaneau, "Le commentaire érigénien sur Martianus Capella (De nuptiis, Lib.I) d'après le manuscrit d'Oxford (Bodl.Libr. Auct.T.2.19, fol. 1-31)," in *Quatre thèmes érigéniens* (Montreal: L'Institut d'études médiévales Albert-le-Grand, 1978).



numbers used to divide the *DN* text are not included with Jeauneau's edition, but they are employed in Willis's critical Latin edition of *DN* and Stahl's translation of *DN*.<sup>157</sup> It would have been ideal to also include a column for Capella's Latin text, but that ultimately appeared impracticable due to the constraints of space.<sup>158</sup>

In my translation, I have italicized the Latin words selected by Eriugena for comment, regardless of whether they were italicized or placed in quotation marks in Jeauneau's edition, and followed them with an English translation in square brackets. Overall, I have followed Jeauneau's orthography except for 1) eliminating page breaks in the manuscript (represented by Jeauneau with a vertical bar: "|"), 2) placing punctuation within quotation marks, 3) exchanging single quotes for double quotes, and 4) separating the grapheme "æ" as "ae." For those Greek words presented by Eriugena in all-capital letters, I have supplied an accented presentation of the Greek when I thought the word obvious; in other instances, where Eriugena's or Capella's Greek is too ambiguous, I have kept the word in all-caps or inserted a bracketed question mark by my suggestion. For example, I have substituted Ἄπειρος ἀγαθός for Eriugena's ΑΠΙΡΩ ΑΓΑΘΟC, in §7, but left ΓΥΜΝΟΛΟΓΟΥCΕΙC as it stands, in §2. When Eriugena uses Greek words but does not capitalize them, I have often inserted the actual Greek. For example, I substituted λόγος for Eriugena's *logos*, in §1. Finally, I do not often comment on those places where Eriugena's usage of Greek is problematic, for example, when he pursues Greek etymologies as with the

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<sup>157</sup> James Willis, *Martianus Capella* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1983). William Stahl and Richard Johnson, trans., *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts, Volume II, The Marriage of Philology and Mercury* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1977).

<sup>158</sup> N.B., Eriugena's glosses do not correspond to every section in *DN*; therefore, some numbers below are left blank, e.g., §12 and §13.

word *ania*, in §7. When I do make a suggestion, I have placed it within square brackets or in a footnote.

At times, Eriugena’s annotations presuppose an intimate knowledge of the *DN* story and Latin text, and his comments make little sense without such familiarity. For those not well acquainted with Capella, I have tried to render a straightforward English translation so that the context for Eriugena’s comments can be referenced easily, using the section numbers and an English translation such as Stahl’s. By such a straightforward translation, I acknowledge that I may incur the “blame of the faithful translator” (*culpam fidei interpretis*) as Eriugena himself feared in regard to his translation of Pseudo-Dionysius’s *Celestial Hierarchy*.<sup>159</sup>

	<b>Eriugena’s Text</b>	<b>Translation</b>
1	INCIPIVNT GLOSAE MARTIANI	THE GLOSSES ON MARTIANUS BEGIN
	Martianus in isto libro mixtim ueritatem cum fabulis dixit. Nam in artibus uera dixit, in aliis autem figmenta quaedam. Ideo autem multis nominibus appellatur ut nobilitas sua ostendatur. Martianus enim a Marte dicitur. Mineus a mineo colore. Felix autem proprium nomen est, aut a felicitate dicitur. Capella dicitur	Martianus [Minneus Felix Capella], in this book, spoke a mixture of truth and fable. For he spoke truthfully concerning the arts, but about other subjects [he spoke] certain fictions. Therefore, he is called by many names, that his fame should be revealed. “Martianus” is said to derive from “Mars.” Minneus [derives] from a reddish color. Felix, however, is [his] proper

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<sup>159</sup> Paul Rorem, *Commentary on the Dionysian Celestial Hierarchy* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2005), 49.

<p>propter instabilitatem suae disputationis: quaedam enim falsa, quaedam uera dixit. Et sicut in sequentibus ideo appellatur peculiare nomen. Duo Martiani erant, unus pater et alter filius; et pater hos uersus cantabat de laude Hymenei, et filius interrogabat unde erant. Videntur enim ante Martianum uetustum esse compositi.</p>	<p>name, is said [to derive] from <i>felicitas</i> [felicity or good fortune]. He is called Capella because of the instability of his reasonings: indeed, some things he said are false, [but] other things he said are true. And, therefore, just as in the following, he is called by a specific name. There were two Martianuses, one the father and the other the son; and this father sang verses concerning the praise of Hymen, and the son asked where they came from. Indeed, they appeared to have been composed [at a time] before the older Martianus.</p>
<p>Ideo autem iste liber <i>De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii</i> dicitur, quia Mercurius multas uirgines quaesiuit, sed non potuit inuenire propter propinquitatem earum, atque ideo Philologiam inuenit. Mercurius dicitur sermo, inde a Grecis dicitur ΕΡΜΗC, et interpretatur medius currens. Sermo enim inter homines currit. Philologia uero studium sapientiae interpretatur:</p>	<p>This book is called <i>Concerning the Marriage of Philology and Mercury</i>, because Mercury inquired after many maidens, but was not able to find [a suitable match] because of their nearness [of kinship], and so he found Philology. Mercury is called word; indeed, by the Greeks he is called Ἑρμῆς and is understood as he who runs between; indeed, the word runs between men. Philology is interpreted as the study of wisdom. Φίλος is</p>

philos enim amor uel studium, logos ratio. Non potuit ergo Mercurius aliam uxorem habere quam studium sapientiae uel rationis.

Hymeneus: ISIDORVS dicit membranulam in lumbis possitam. Qui autem de natura rerum disputant aiunt duas membranulas esse, una quae est circa cerebrum quae grece uocatur ΜΗΝΙΚΑ, altera uero quae est in lateribus, quae gr(ece) dicitur ΦΡΕΝ, inde frenetica passio. Si quis autem altius attenderit, ab eo quod est “himenos,” inde Himeneus sesilis. Ipse enim ordinat sedilia nuptiarum deorum et dearum, id est concordiam omnium rerum discordantium. Et ipse dicitur Cupido. Nam Venus non legitur alium filium habere nisi unum, qui uocatur Cupido.

love or zeal, [and] λόγος is reason. Mercury, therefore, was not able to have another wife [other] than zeal for wisdom or reason.

*Hymeneus:* Isidor calls [this] the membrane placed in the loins. Those who discuss the nature of things say there are two membranes, one which is around the brain which in Greek is called ὑμήν[?], the other is in the side, which in Greek is called φρήν, thence, frenetic passion. Moreover, if anyone would attend more deeply: the sense of Hymeneus is from ἡμενος [i.e., from ἥμαι, “to sit”], having to do with “sitting.” He himself [i.e., the god, Hymen] arranges the marriage seats of the gods and goddesses, that is, the harmony of all discordant things. And, [in the text,] he is called Cupid. On the other hand, Venus is not read to have another son except the one, who is called Cupid.

<p>Inde quaestio oritur: Cur dicitur in his uersibus eum esse progenitum a Camena, cum Camena dicitur esse mater omnium Musarum, et a canendo dicitur? Si igitur filius Camenae est, non est filius Veneris, quae uocatur alio nomine Kypris, id est mixtura.</p>	<p>Thence, an inquiry arises: Why in these lines is [Hymen] said to be the progeny of Camena, when Camena is said to be the mother of all the Muses, and is named after [the word,] <i>canendo</i> [singing]? If he is the son of Camena, he is not the son of Venus—who is called elsewhere by the other name, Κύπρις, that is, [in Latin,] the alloy [i.e., copper].</p>
<p>Sic soluitur. <i>Progenitum deum</i> pro genituo plurali debemus accipere, id est: progenitarum dearum. Et sic construitur: Quem perhibent psallentem thalamis copula sacra progenitum deum, id est progenitarum dearum matre Camena. Et sic est sensus: Deae progenitae a matre Camena, id est, nouem Musae perhibent istum psallentem thalamis.</p>	<p>Thus [the work] opens: <i>Progenitum deum</i> [which] we must accept for the genitive plural, that is, <i>Progenitarum dearum</i> [progenies of the goddesses]. And it is constructed in this way: they regard what is played on the strings for the sacred union of marriage [to be] the production of the gods, that is, the products of [those] goddesses from the mother, Camena. And this is the sense: those goddesses, the nine Muses, begotten from their mother Camena, bestow that playing of the strings for marriage.</p>
<p>Ista laus de generali amore est. Ista igitur laus non ad illum qui dicitur</p>	<p>This praise is concerning general love; it does not pertain to that one who is said to be the</p>

praeesse libidinibus pertinet, sed ad illum qui copulat omnes amores in unum. Sicut enim per Musas armonia omnium rerum significatur, sic per Hymeneum omnis amor generalis qui coniungit omnia.

“Thalamus” dicitur ΑΠΟ ΤΟΥ ΘΗΛΙΜΑΤΟΣ, hoc est a uoluntate.

*Semina pugnancia*: ideo dixit quia semina sunt quaedam quae ante tempus uolunt surgere, sed in *archanis uinculis*, id est in secretis naturae sinibus, retinentur ne ante tempus surgant. Atque ideo dixit *stringens* “qui stringit,” et est greca constructio.

*Dissona nexa*, id est elimenta discordantia. Nam quattuor elementa

chief of wantonness, but to that one who unites all loves in one. Indeed, just as the harmony of all things is signified through the Muses, thus, through Hymen, [is signified] the general love of all things that joins all things.

*Thalamus* [marriage chamber] means ἀπὸ τοῦ θελήματος, that is, willingly.<sup>160</sup>

*Semina pugnancia* [fighting seeds]: he said this because there are certain seeds that, before [their] time, wish to rise, but in concealed chains, that is, in the secret folds of nature, are held back [so as] not to rise before [the appropriate] time. Therefore, he said, *stringens* [drawing tight], “who draws tight,” and it is a Greek construction.

*Dissona nexa* [dissonant unions], that is, discordant elements. For there are four elements

<sup>160</sup> Eriugena seems to have θάλαμος [bedroom, marriage chamber, marriage] confused with θέλημα [will].

sunt in mundo, in quibus consistit omne corpus, id est ignis, aer, aqua, terra. Duo igitur contraria sunt: ignis id est calor, et frigiditas id est aqua. Duo iterum contraria sunt: humiditas et siccitas, humiditas id est aer, et siccitas id est terra. Ex his igitur quattuor duo sunt quasi masculi, ignis et aer; iterum duo sunt quasi feminae, aqua et terra.

Quattuor igitur elementa quattuor suas proprias qualitates habent, id est caliditas, humiditas, frigiditas, siccitas; et unumquodque elementum habet duas qualitates, unam propriam, et alteram aliunde; et inde conficitur ut ex illarum mixtura corpus aliquod efficiatur; nihil enim ex propriis qualitatibus nascitur per se. Duo igitur agunt ex his et duo patiuntur, id est caliditas et humiditas agunt, frigiditas et siccitas patiuntur, quia ex aqua et terra nascuntur omnia, additis qualitatibus superiorum. Duo

in the world in which each object consists, i.e., fire, air, water, earth. Two are contrary: fire, which is heat, and coldness, which is water.

Another two are contrary: moistness and dryness, moistness, which is air and dryness, which is earth. From these four, two are, as it were, masculine, fire and air, and the other two are feminine, water and earth.

The four elements have their own characteristics: hotness, moistness, coldness, and dryness. And each element has two qualities, one individually and the other from another source. From this, it comes about that from the mixing of those [elements] something is brought about. Nothing from its own characteristics is born by itself. Therefore, two of these are active and two are passive, that is, hotness and moistness are active, and coldness and dryness are passive, because all things are born from water and earth, being added to the qualities of the previously mentioned elements.

igitur contraria sunt caliditas et  
frigiditas, et duae in medio positae  
humiditas et siccitas.

Ideo dicit *consanguineo* quia tres  
Grates, quas hic appellat *Gratia trina*,  
tres filiae sunt Iunonis. Iuno autem soror  
est Veneris, cuius filius est Himeneus.  
In gratia ergo trina intellige uocem,  
uultum, gestum. Per uocem  
pulcritudinem eloquentiae, per uultum  
similitudinem uniuscuiusque rei, per  
gestum prudentiam uel habitum.

- 2 *Incrementis lustralibus*, id est quinque  
annis crescentibus. Lustrum enim dicitur  
quinquennium duobus modis. Quod  
primo post censum lustrabatur cum  
cereis urbs Roma, et ille primus census  
de ferro fiebat; inde post aliud  
quinquennium de argento; post aliud  
quinquennium de auro, inde sunt  
indictiones. Vel lustrum quinquennium

Therefore, two are contrary, hotness and  
coldness, and two are placed in the middle,  
moistness and dryness.

Therefore, he says *consanguineo* [kindred],  
because the three graces, which he calls *Gratia  
trina*, are the three daughters of Juno. Juno is  
the sister of Venus, whose son is Hymen. In the  
three graces, therefore, you should understand  
voice, visage, and deed. Through the voice,  
beauty of eloquence [is perceived], through the  
face, the likeness of each thing, through deed,  
discretion or condition.

*Incrementis lustralibus* [five-fold increases],  
that is, increasing five years. Five-year  
purification is said to occur in two ways. With  
respect to the first, after the census, the city of  
Rome was purified with candles, and that first  
census was made from iron, thereupon, after  
another five years, from silver, after another  
five years, from gold, thence, there are fifteen-  
year spaces. Alternatively, the five-year



dicitur quia Sol post bisextum in quinto anno ad initium sui cursus reuertitur, et tunc lustrat totum signiferum.

*Decuriatum*, honorabilem, id est de curia ductum. Nullus enim iuuenis in curia uel in concilio Romanorum, ubi curae curabantur, intrabat.

“Nugas” nomen indeclinabile est, et significat leuitatem. In plurali autem numero declinatur. Inde *nugulas*, ineptias, id est leuitates inutiles.

“Nicto,” uigilo. *Nictantis*, uigilantis.

“Antistes” autem dicitur quia ante stat, id est honorabilior, siue episcopus seu laicus.

purification is called [such] because the Sun, after the intercalary day in the fifth year, reverts to the beginning of its orbit; and, at that point, purifies the entire zodiac [*signiferum*].

*Decuriatum*, *honorabilem* [honored], that is, having been led from the senate [*de curia*].

Indeed, no youth entered into the senate house or into the popular assembly of the Romans where matters of state were managed.

*Nugas* [jesting, trifling] is an indeclinable noun and signifies levity. However, it is declined in the plural. Thence, *nugulas* [jokes, jests] or *ineptias* [silliness, folly], that is, useless frivolities.

*Nicto* [I blink], I keep watch. *Nictantis* [blinking], keeping watch.

He is called *Antistes* [High-priest], because he stands before [*ante stat*]. That is, [he is] a more honorable one, either a bishop or layman.

<p>ΓΥΜΝΟΛΟΓΟΥΕΙC, id est exercitaris. Gimnasium enim dicitur exercitatio philosophiae.</p> <p><i>Priusquam fores reseraris</i>, id est portas aperies. Sic agis sicut quidam princeps qui in cubiculo solus sibi cantat et nec ingredi nec egredi sinit sed solus cantat: sic tu agis, <i>o mi pater</i>.</p> <p>ΕΓΕΠΙΜΙΩΝ genetivus pluralis est, et significat “ascensionum,” quia opus quod significatur hoc nomine ascensionem significat, uerbi gratia, sicut in hoc loco ascensionem</p>	<p>ΓΥΜΝΟΛΟΓΟΥΕΙC, that is, exercise. A gymnasium [i.e., a Greek school] is called the practice of philosophy.<sup>161</sup></p> <p><i>Priusquam fores reseraris</i> [“Before you open the doors”], that is, “You will open the doors.” [Paraphrasing:] “Thus, you act just as a certain priest who, alone in the inner shrine, sings to himself and neither allows [anyone] to enter nor to exit unless he alone sings. You are acting like that, my father.”<sup>162</sup></p> <p>ΕΓΕΠΙΜΙΩΝ is the plural genitive, and it signifies ascension, because the work signified by this noun signifies ascension. For example, just as in this place, [it] signifies the ascension of Philology and all the Muses into heaven.<sup>163</sup></p>
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<sup>161</sup> Scholars have suggested different emendations of Capella’s neologism, “TYMNOΛΟΓΟΥΕΙC.” Danuta Shanzer explains one possible solution by Préaux, γυμνολογιζεις, in *A Philosophical and Literary Commentary on Martianus Capella’s De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, 54. A literal translation would run, “to make *logoi* while naked.”

<sup>162</sup> Here, Eriugena is paraphrasing Capella.

<sup>163</sup> ΕΓΕΠΙΜΙΩΝ is another neologism of Capella. Shanzer explains an emendation by Grotius, ἐγέρσιμον [from which one wakes] (*A Philosophical and Literary Commentary*, 55).

Philologiae et omnium Musarum in  
caelum significat.

*Praelibante Hymeneo*, id est  
praegustante, hoc est, in initio omnium  
nuptiarum necesse est ut laus Hymenei  
cantetur, siue ipse fecerit illam laudem  
siue alii.

“Scaturrigo” dicitur ubi fons aquae  
surgit, et componitur ab eo quod est  
scateo et rigo. Inde nomen dicitur  
scaturrigo id est initium.

*Satyra* uocatur unaquaque poetria,  
lasciua uel ludicra.

“Percello, perculi.” inde *perculerit*, id  
est percusserit uel nocuerit.

*Praelibante Hymeneo* [tasting for Hymen], that  
is, “tasting in advance.” That is, in the  
beginning of all weddings, it is necessary that  
the praise of Hymen be sung, that either [the  
groom] himself make that praise or another.

*Scaturrigo* [bubbling spring] is said where a  
font of water rises, and it is constructed from  
*scateo* [I gush forth] and *rigo* [I moisten].  
Thence, the noun form is *scaturrigo* [i.e.,  
*scaturigo*, bubbling spring], that is, the  
beginning.

Every poetess is called *Satyra*, playful or  
sportive

*Percello, perculi* [I beat down]: thence,  
*perculerit* [he struck down], that is, *percusserit*  
[he beat] or *nocuerit* [he harmed].

3	<p><i>Praeclues</i>. Clyos, gloria: inde <i>praeclues</i>, gloriosi. Cluo uero pugno uel ausculto uel defendo significat.</p> <p><i>Cecuta</i> erba est cuius sucus, si in oculos mittatur, orbantur uisus. Inde <i>cecutio</i>, orbo. Inde “<i>cecutiens</i>,” orbus.</p> <p><i>Epyca</i> dicuntur omnia carmina ex omnibus pedibus composita propter superexcellencia. Epi enim super dicitur, epicos excelsus: inde <i>epica</i>, superexcellencia. Eadem etiam uocant <i>eroica</i> propter honorem et uirtutem, quia uirorum fortium carmina maxime uocantur <i>eroica</i>. <i>Lirica</i> uero carmina dicuntur ea carmina quae cum melodia id est cum modulatione canuntur. Aliud est enim carmina tantum uoce cantare, aliud cum additur sonus cuiusdam melodiae, siue lyrae, siue tybiae, siue aliorum instrumentorum.</p>	<p><i>Praeclues</i> [famous]: <i>Clyos</i> [κλυτός?] [means] glory, thence, <i>praeclues</i>, glorious ones. <i>Cluo</i> signifies “I fight” or “I heed” or “I defend.”</p> <p><i>Cecuta</i> is an herb whose juice, if it is cast in eyes, deprives them of sight. Thence, <i>cecutio</i> [I am blind], <i>orbo</i> [I deprive]. Thence, <i>cecutiens</i> [blinding], <i>orbus</i> [bereft].</p> <p>Ἐπικά [epics] are all songs composed from all [poetic] feet on account of the very excellent [e.g., heroes]. Ἐπί [upon] is called “over,” ἐπικός [is called] “elevated;” thence, ἐπικά [means] very excellent. Indeed, they call the same [songs] heroic because of honor and strength, because the songs of strong men are chiefly called <i>eroica</i>. In fact, those lyric poems [<i>lyrica</i>] are called songs [<i>carmina</i>] sung with melody, i.e., with modulation [of voice].</p> <p>Another type is singing songs with only the voice, another when the sound of a certain melody is added, either by a lyre, or tibia, or by other instruments.</p>
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4	<p><i>Ope coniuga</i>. Ops enim dicitur terra, eo quod opem fert, id est fructum.</p> <p>KYBIBH, KYBOC, BIOG, firmitas, soliditas. BYON etiam dicitur uita. In quibusdam libris Kybile legitur, quasi cybos leos: solida planicies.</p> <p>“Memphis” quaerela interpretatur, et est palus in Aegypto.</p>	<p><i>Ope coniuga</i> [Ops, his wife]: Ops is called Earth, because she produces plenty, that is, crops.</p> <p>Κυβήβη[?], Κύβοϛ, Βίος, <i>firmitas</i> [firmness], <i>soliditas</i> [solidity]. Βίον is called life. In some books, <i>Kybile</i> is read as if κύβοϛ λαός[?]: solid plane [i.e., of a cube].</p> <p><i>Memphis</i> is interpreted as a complaint and is a swamp in Egypt.</p>
5	<p><i>Mater</i> id est Maia, mater Mercurii: una est ex septem stellis quae Plyades uocantur. Sunt enim septem filiae Athlantis in cauda Tauri, quae uocantur Plyades ΑΠΟ ΤΟΥ ΠΛΑΙCΤΟC, hoc est a pluralitate. Quae etiam alio nomine uocantur Vergiliae, eo quod uerno tempore oriuntur. Cum ergo Mercurius in unoquoque anno duodecim signa lustrat, cum ueniebat ad matrem suam in maio mense, cogebat eum uxorem</p>	<p><i>Mater</i>: that is, Maia, the mother of Mercury; she is one of the seven stars called the Pleiades. The seven daughters of Atlas in the tail of [the constellation] Taurus are called the Pleiades; ἀπὸ τοῦ πλῆθους[?], that is, from a plurality. Which [i.e., the Pleiades] by another name are called <i>Vergiliae</i>, because they rise during springtime. Therefore, as Mercury yearly roams the twelve signs, he came to his mother in the month of May, [and] she urged him to take a wife.</p>

ducere.

*Palestra* dicitur ΑΠΟ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΛΙΝ, id est a rustica luctatione.

*Celibatum*, id est castitatem. Celeps enim dicitur caelesti aptus uel caelestem uitam ducens. Tribus igitur causis Cyllenius cogitur uxorem ducere. Prima causa est quia uidit deos habere uxores ac filios ac nepotes. Secunda causa est propter suam matrem, quae accusabat eum in unoquoque anno. Tertia causa est, quae est maxima, quia uirilis et pubes et fortis esse uidebatur.

- 6 *Longae deliberationis*, id est qui uxorem uult ducere, multas deliberationes, id est uarias cogitationes habet. Ideo Sophian uoluit Mercurius accipere primum, quia sapientia superat omnia. Sed ideo non potuit eam habere propter Palladem, quia collactanea, id est connutrita ei fuit.

*Palestra* [Gymnasium] is called ἀπὸ τῆς πάλης[?], that is, from country wrestling.

*Celibatum* [celibacy, bachelorhood], that is, chastity. An unmarried man is called suitable for heaven or to leading a divine life. Therefore, for three reasons the Cyllenian [Mercury] is urged to take a wife. The first reason is because he saw the gods having wives and sons and grandsons. The second reason is because his mother reproached him each year. The third reason, the greatest, is that he seemed to be mature and grown-up and strong.

*Longae deliberationis* [of lengthy deliberation], that is, he who wishes to take a wife engages in extensive deliberation, i.e., he entertains a diversity of thoughts. Therefore, Mercury first wished to take Wisdom, because wisdom surpasses all. But he was not able to have her because Pallas was her foster-sister, that is, she

Sicut enim Minerua immortalis est, quae alio nomine Athena, id est immortalis nuncupatur, sic sapientia. Atque ideo Mercurius, qui est sermo, non potuit eam habere. Sapientia enim sine eloquentia sepe profuit, nunquam nocuit; eloquentia sine sapientia sepe nocuit, nunquam profuit. Minerua quasi MIN-erua, id est: MI, non; erua, mortalis; id est immortalis.

*Mantiken* id est diuinitio. *Pronoe*, prouidentia. Ideo Mantichen, id est diuinitio, Solem secuta est, quia sine Sole nulla diuinitio uel coniectura potest esse.

7 “*Endelechia*” uocatur perfecta aetas, eliche aetas generalis. Ideo autem dicitur

was raised with her. Indeed, just as Minerva is immortal (whose other name is Athena, who is called immortal) thus was Wisdom. Therefore, Mercury, who is “word,” was not able to have her. Wisdom often did good without eloquence [and] never injured; [but] eloquence harmed often without wisdom [and] never did good. Minerva is just like μή-erua; that is, μή, not [and] [*en*]erua, mortal; that is immortal.

*Mantiken*, that is, divination. *Pronoe*, foresight. Therefore, Μαντικήν, that is divination, follows the Sun, because without the Sun no divination or discerning omens [*coniectura*] is possible.

Ἐντελέχεια is called the perfect age, ἡλικία, the general age. The soul is said to be the daughter

anima esse filia Solis, quae gr(ece)	of the Sun, which in Greek is called νοῦς, <sup>164</sup>
uocatur NYC, quia dum anima ad	because, when the soul will have reached the
perfectam aetatem peruenerit endelechia	perfect age, it is called ἐντελέχεια. Therefore,
uocatur. Perfecta igitur anima a claritate	the soul is said to be perfected by the clarity of
scientiae dicitur.	knowledge. <sup>165</sup>
Per <i>diadema</i> aeternitas et immortalitas	By <i>diadema</i> [crown] is understood eternity and
intelligitur.	immortality.

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<sup>164</sup> Plato calls the Sun the offspring of the Good in *Republic* 508B-C, and, similarly, in Pseudo-Dionysius's *On the Divine Names* IV:4, the Sun is an image of the Good. As expressed by Pseudo-Dionysius, all things metaphorically emanate from the Sun and are drawn to it: "For as the Goodness of the all-transcendent Godhead reaches from the highest and most perfect forms of being unto the lowest, and still is beyond them all, remaining superior to those above and retaining those below in its embrace, and so gives light to all things that can receive It, and creates and vitalizes and maintains and perfects them, and is the Measure of the Universe and its Eternity, its Numerical Principle, its Order, its Embracing Power, its Cause and its End: even so this great, all-bright and ever-shining Sun, which is the visible image of the Divine Goodness, faintly reechoing the activity of the Good, illumines all things that can receive its light while retaining the utter simplicity of light, and expands above and below throughout the visible world the beams of its own radiance . . . ." ("Dionysius the Areopagite: On the Divine Names," *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*, accessed 11 March 2014, <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/rold/dionysius.iv.v.html>>.)

<sup>165</sup> Ἐντελέχεια [full, complete reality] is often confused with ἐνδελέχεια [continuity, persistency]. Eriugena's use of the word is consistent with Calcidius who, in his commentary on *Timaeus*, defines what he calls *endelichiam* as *absolutam perfectionem* (CCXXII, ed. J. H. Waszink, 236, 5-7).



Per *sotiale uinculum* pulcritudinem significat. *Tritonia* uocatur Minerua a Tritone gigante, quem occidit in palude Afri. Per “*interulam resolutam*” uarietates uirtutum significat.

*Reginioque coco*. ΑΠΙΡΩ ΑΓΑΘΟC, hoc est ualde bonum. In radice autem Athlantis montis est arbor similitudine cypressi, sed grauissimi odoris, de qua arbore nascitur lana optima, inde autem reginium id est pretiosissimum uestimentum fit. “*Strophium*,” bis conuersum, id est bifaciem.

*Amiculo*: amicio, induo, inde amictus et amicus. *Delius*, id est Appollo, dedit animae duas diuinationis species, id est unam naturalem, alteram coniecturalem; et dedit illi peritiam augurii ex uolucris et fulgoribus; et dedit scire astrologiam per *meatus caeli*

*Sotiale uinculum* [i.e., *socialle uinculum*, conjugal chain] signifies beauty. Minerva is called *Tritonia* from the giant Triton, whom she killed in an African swamp. *Interulam resolutam* [undergarment having been loosened] signifies varieties of mighty works.

*Reginioque coco*. [queenly scarlet]. Ἀπειρος ἄγαθός, that is, greatly good. At the foot of the mountain Atlas, there is a tree like a cypress, but of a most heavy odor. From this tree arises high-quality wool; moreover, from [this wool], a queenly, i.e., a most costly garment is made. *Strophium* [breast-band], twice twisted, that is, two-sided.

*Amiculo* [cloak]: *amicio* [I clothe], *induo* [I dress], thence, *amictus* [having been clothed] and *amicus* [friend]. The Delian, that is, Apollo, gave to the soul two types of divination: one natural and another based on discerning omens [*coniecturalem*]. He gave to that one [i.e., the soul] practical knowledge of augury [drawn]

*siderumque*. Nam tres uirgae sunt: una geometrica quae dicitur radius, alia astrologiae qua signa monstrantur, tertia prophetica uel coiecturalis. Auspiciu[m] dicitur quasi aues aspiciens, hoc est augurium ex auibus. Aruspiciu[m], id est aram aspiciens, hoc est augurium ex aris.

“Ania,” intelligentia. NIA enim intelligentia, ab eo quod est NOYC dicitur. “A” apud Grecos multa significat. Per uices enim negat, per uices implet, sicut in hoc nomine ANIA:

from birds and lightning; and he provided knowledge of astrology through *meatus caeli siderumque* [the movements of the sky and stars]. For there are three branches: one, geometry, which is called the [measuring] rod, another [branch of] astrology, by which signs are revealed, third, prophesy or discerning omens [i.e., *coniecturalis*]. Divination [*Auspiciu[m]*] is called [thus] because of bird watching [*aues aspiciens*], this is augury from birds. Soothsaying [*Aruspiciu[m]*], that is, examining the altar [*aram aspiciens*] is augury from the altars.

*Ania*, intelligence. Νοῖα indeed [is] intelligence, from that which is called νοῦς. “A” among the Greeks signifies many things. By turn, it means to negate or to increase just as in this word, ἄνοια, where it increases the sense.<sup>166</sup>

<sup>166</sup> Concerning Eriugena’s creative use of Greek, Edouard Jeuneau writes, “Toutefois, c’est une gageure que de voir en ἄνοια une forme intensive de νοῖα” “Le commentaire érigénien sur Martianus Capella (De nuptiis, Lib.I) d’après le manuscrit d’Oxford (Bodl.Libr. Auct.T.2.19, fol. 1-31),” in *Quatre thèmes érigéniens* (Montreal: Institut d’études médiévales Albert-le-Grand, 1978), 112n.28.

ibi enim auget sensum.

Per *speculum* significatur origo animae, ut sciat qua origine est creata, id est a sapientia ad intelligentiam et postea ad animam.

*Lemnius*, Vulcanus, a Lemno insula, ubi intrat uentus cum aqua intus in terram, et est iuxta Siciliam: ibi enim fingitur officina Vulcani esse. Per “insopibiles ignes,” id est per inextinguibiles ignes, intelligitur inextinguibile ingenium animae. Ingenium enim sedes ignis creditur.

Venus dicitur *Afrodite*. Afros enim uocatur a Grecis spuma. Per dona quae Venus dedit animae nihil aliud significatur nisi contagiones et inlecebrae huius uitae. Per *crepitacula* maiores sonos significat, sicut lirae, timpani et cetera; per *tinnitus* minores et

By *speculum* [mirror] is signified the origin of the soul, so that it knows from what source it was created, that is, from wisdom to intelligence and afterwards to soul.

*Lemnius*, Vulcan, derived from the island Lemno, where wind with water enter into the Earth. It is near Sicily, where the forge workshop of Vulcan is thought to be. By *insopibiles ignes*, that is, through inextinguishable fire, the inextinguishable nature of the soul is understood. Indeed, [the soul’s] nature is believed [to be] the seat of fire.

Venus is called Ἀφροδίτη. Indeed, foam is called ἄφρός by the Greeks. Through the gifts that Venus gave to the soul, nothing other is signified except the contaminations and allurements of this life. By rattles, large [i.e., loud] sounds are signified, just as [the sound of] a lyre, timpani, etc.; by ringing sounds

	<p>inferiores sonitus. Omnis uirtus animae in ipsa anima est, sine communione corporis. Anima uero cum corpore duo quaedam habet, et ponuntur in bono et in malo: et dūne et lūpe, edūne delectatio uel uoluptas, lūpe tristitia.</p>	<p>[<i>tinnitus</i>], lesser and lower [volumed] sounds [are signified]. All moral strength [<i>uirtus</i>] of soul is in the soul itself without association with the body. In fact, the soul has two certain things with the body, and they are divided [<i>ponuntur</i>] into good and bad; ἡδονή and λύπη: ἡδονή [means] delight or pleasure, λύπη [means] sadness.</p>
	<p>Per <i>ueiculum</i> uelocitas ingenii significatur. Abstulit omnem tarditatem ab anima. Per “compedes” significatur memoria quae custodit quaedam ex animi uelocitate. Sed est uirtus suadendi, uirtus intelligentiae uirtus conceptionis animi.</p>	<p><i>Ueiculum</i> [i.e., <i>Vehiculum</i>, vehicle] signifies a natural swiftness. It removes all slowness from the soul. Memory is signified by <i>compedes</i> [chains], which restrain things from the swiftness of the mind. But moral strength is to be urged—the strength of intelligence, the strength of the concept of the soul.</p>
8	<p><i>Menstrua praecursione</i>. Ideo hoc dicit, quia Venus elongatur a Sole plus quam spatium unius mensis, id est quadraginta sex partibus; Mercurius uero elongatur a Sole uiginti duabus. Mercurius igitur, qui nunquam separatur a Sole plus quam</p>	<p><i>Menstrua praecursione</i> [monthly running ahead]. [Martianus] says this because Venus is withdrawn from the Sun the space of more than one month, that is, 46 degrees. Mercury is withdrawn from the Sun 22 [degrees]. Therefore, Mercury, which is never separated</p>

uiginti duabus partibus, non debuerat sine suo fratre aliquod consilium agere. Ideo autem dicit “praemittentem,” id est praecurrentem, non quia ante Solem currit, sed etiam subsequitur. Duo ex illis recto cursu currunt et non fiunt retrograda, id est Sol et Luna. Quinque autem non solum antecedunt Solem, sed etiam subsequuntur, sicut Saturnus, Iouis, Mars. Venus uero et Mercurius non ambiunt terram sicut tres planetae qua sunt supra Solem, sed circa Solem habent circulos.

9 *Volatilem uirgam.* Virgam Mercurii dicit, quae uocatur caducium: facit enim homines cadere et resurgere. Sermo enim rethoris per uices grauat, per uices liberat.

*Talaria* uero dicta sunt a talo, eo quod circa talos fit axis cum pennis; et per

from the Sun more than 22 degrees, had not been duty bound to deliver any advice without his brother [i.e., Apollo]. Therefore, he says *praemittentem* [sending ahead], that is, running ahead, not because [Mercury] runs before the Sun [only]—he actually pursues [the Sun as well]. Two of these travel by a right course and do not retrograde, that is, the Sun and Moon. Moreover, five planets not only precede the Sun, but follow [in retrograde motion also], just as [with] Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars. Venus and Mercury do not orbit [*ambiant*] the Earth, like the three planets that are above the Sun, but have orbits around the Sun.

*Volatilem uirgam* [flying staff]. He says the staff of Mercury, which is called the caduceus, makes men die and resurrect. Indeed, the word of an orator by turns oppresses, by turns liberates.

*Talaria* [Mercury’s winged sandals] are so named from “ankle” [*talo*], because the axis

	<p>haec omnia significatur uelocitas sermonis.</p> <p><i>Nunc in fanis</i>: hoc dicit de anthro Sibyllae. Quae Sibylla uocatur Erithrea. Sibylla autem dicitur sithos – bole, hoc est consilium diuinum.</p> <p><i>Fisiculatis prosicis</i>, id est uitalibus assumptis. Proseco enim dicitur accipio. Fysis uero de natura, de fluxu aquarum, de uitalibus partibus, sicut in hoc loco. Hae sunt uitales partes: cor, iecur, epar, ilia, cerebrum et cetera. Ilia autem dicuntur omnia interanea.</p>	<p>around the ankles is made with wings. All these things signify the speed of the word.</p> <p><i>Nunc in fanis</i>: he says this concerning the cave of the Erythraean sibyl. A sibyl is called σιός βουλή, that is, divine counsel.</p> <p><i>Fisiculatis prosicis</i> [cutting of entrails], that is, taking the vitals. “Cut off” [<i>proseco</i>] is said for “accept” [<i>accipio</i>]. Φύσις [origin or one’s nature] concerns nature, concerns the flow of waters, concerns the vital parts, just as in this place. These are the vital parts: the heart, liver [i.e., <i>jecur</i>, seat of the soul/affections], liver [i.e., <i>hepar</i>], intestines, brain, etc. Moreover, all the entrails [<i>omnia interanea</i>] are called intestines [<i>ilia</i>].</p>
10	<p><i>Aditorum fastigiis</i>, id est culminibus generaliter templorum. Quia Delio officia faciebant per sex menses in Delo insula. Iterum autem per alios sex</p>	<p><i>Aditorum fastigiis</i> [of the approaches to the pediments], that is, generally, to the peaks of temples. Services were made to the Delian [i.e., Apollo] for six months on the island of Delos,</p>

menses in Aelicon.

*Vittisque semiuulsis*. Vittas posuit pro omni sacerdotali habitu.

*Et oscinum*. Oscinum dicitur quicquid ore cantat. Oscen enim dicitur quasi ore canens. Hic tamen de uolatilibus intelligitur.

*Augur pithius*. In PEPLO THEOPRASTI legitur quendam serpentem prophetasse in Delo insula. Quem occidit Appollo, et inde cepit postea prophetare, ideoque *Augur pithius* uocatus est.

*Item eum in Elicon*. Elicon enim uocatur Appollo, quia trahebat omnes

for another six months on Helicon.

*Vittisque semiuulsis* [half-torn ribbon]. He specified ribbons for all priestly dress.

*Et oscinum* [divining-bird]. It is said of divining-birds [*oscinum*] [that they] sing anything with the mouth. Indeed, a divining-bird is mentioned as if singing by the mouth. Yet this is understood concerning flying creatures.

*Augur pithius* [Pythian diviner]. In “The Robe [i.e., πέπλος] of Theophrastus,” we read that some kind of serpent was prophesying on the island of Delos. Apollo killed it, and, from then on, he began [i.e., *incepit*] to prophesy. Therefore, he is called the Pythian diviner.<sup>167</sup>

*Item eum in Elicon* [Likewise, him in Helicon]. Apollo is called Helicon because he drew all

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<sup>167</sup> Concerning this intriguing reference to the “πέπλος of Theophrastus,” see Lutz, *Iohannis Scotti Annotationes in Marcianum*, 227-28.

	<p>homines ad se: elico enim tractus dicitur. <i>Delon</i>, eo quod clara responsa dabat. <i>Licium</i>, id est, licos dicitur lupus, Lycius Appollo ab expulsiōe luporum, uel eo quod homines in lupos conuertit: inde lupercal suum templum dicitur. Vel ex eo Licius quia, sicut lupus deuorat peccora, sic Sol consumit omnes humores.</p> <p><i>Crepidās myrcidas</i>, id est fundamenta myrtea: mirce enim dicitur mirtus.</p> <p><i>Presagiorum</i>: presagia duobus modis dicuntur, aut in prophetia aut in coniectura.</p>	<p>men to himself; indeed, <i>elico</i> [i.e., <i>elicio</i>, call forth] is said [for] “drawing out” [<i>tractus</i>]. [He is called the] Delian, therefore, because he gave famous answers. [He is called the] Lycian, that is, λύκος, which is called wolf [<i>lupus</i>]. [He is called] Lycian Appollo after the expulsion of the wolves, or because he converts men into wolves. Therefore, his temple is called Lupercal. Or [he is said to be] from Lycia because, just as a wolf devours cattle, thus the Sun consumes all liquid.</p>
11	<p><i>Parnasia rupes</i>. Parnasus mons duo cornua habet, id est Cheteron et Lychera: Bachus adoratur in uno, Appollo in altero.</p>	<p><i>Crepidās myrcidas</i> [myrtle sandals], that is, myrtle bottoms: <i>mirce</i> is indeed called myrtle.</p> <p><i>Presagiorum</i>: prophesies [<i>praesagia</i>] are named in two ways, either in prediction [<i>prophetia</i>] or divining omens [<i>coniectura</i>].</p> <p><i>Parnasia rupes</i> [Parnassian rock]. Mount Parnassus has two peaks, that is, <i>Cheteron</i> and <i>Lychera</i>: Bacchus is worshipped on one, Appollo on the other.</p>



<p><i>Chirreos recessus</i>. Chirrus est mons Indiae in quo fanum et specus Appollinis erat.</p>	<p><i>Chirreos recessus</i> [Cirrhaean retreat]. <i>Chirrus</i> is a mountain of India on which were the temple and grotto of Apollo.</p>
<p><i>Alii transacti cursus</i>: de illis dicit qui iam recesserunt aut de his qui in presenti sunt. <i>Aliae adueniebant</i>, id est de his quae nascuntur. <i>Vt uelut fumidae</i>: de his dicit qui cito nascuntur et cito moriuntur. “Fortuna” enim dicitur concatenatio causarum.</p>	<p><i>Alii transacti cursus</i> [Some, their course completed]: he says this concerning those who now have withdrawn or concerning these who are in the present. <i>Aliae adueniebant</i> [Others who arrived]: that is, concerning those being born. He says <i>Vt uelut fumidae</i> [So that as if a smoke] concerning those who are born quickly and quickly die. <i>Fortuna</i> is said to be a sequence of causes.</p>
<p><i>Crepitabat appulsu</i>. Crepo, sono. Musica enim duobus modis efficitur, aut appulsu aut sufflatione: appulsu in cordis et in aliis, flatus autem in tibiis et in aliis quae fiunt flatu.</p>	<p><i>Crepitabat appulsu</i> [Rustled by the impact]. Resound [<i>crepo</i>], sound [<i>sono</i>]. Music is brought about in two ways, either by impact or blowing: by impact upon strings and on other things, blowing on flutes [<i>tibiis</i>] and on other things that are made for blowing.</p>
<p><i>Acuto sonitu</i>. Queritur cur Martianus acutum sonum dicit esse in summitate</p>	<p><i>Acuto sonitu</i> [sharp sound, i.e., a high pitch]. One asks why Martianus says a high sound is in</p>

arborum, id est in celesti musica, ut acuitas sit in Saturno et grauitas in Luna. Ideo hoc dicit quia quicquid terrae adheret grauius sonat, quicquid autem in puriori loco currit acutius sonat. In omni musica quae cordis efficitur, tetracorda uel quina fiunt. Primum tetracordon uocatur principalis principalium, secundum subprincipalis principalium, tertium mediarum, quartum disiunctarum, quintum hyperboleon id est excellentium. In primo ergo tetracordon grauitas uocum fit, in ultimo autem acuitas, et quicquid in medio mixtura quaedam est inter grauitatem et acutum. Inde dicit in sequentibus: *media ratis*, id est media arboris.

*Succinentibus duplis*, id est tonis ut in pedibus, in iambo duplum, id est duo ad unum. *Ac sesquialteris*, ut in bachio, id est tria ad duo. *Necnon sesquiterciis*, ut in epitritis, ut sunt quattuor ad tria.

the summit of the trees, that is, music in heaven, and that the highest should be in Saturn and the lowest in the moon. He says this because whatever clings to the earth sounds lower, but whatever runs in an open place sounds higher. In all music that is made on strings, fourths and fifths arise. The first tetrachord is called *principalis principalium*, the second [tetrachord is called] *subprincipalis principalium*, the third, *mediarum*, the fourth, *disiunctarum*, the fifth, *hyperboleon*, that is, *excellentium*. Therefore, in the first tetrachord the lowest voice is made, but in the last [tetrachord] is the highest, and whatever is in the middle is some kind of mixture between low and high. Therefore, he says in the following, *media ratis* [middle of the raft] that is, in the middle of the tree.

*Succinentibus duplis* [Singing at the octave], that is, by tones as in [metrical] feet, [e.g.,] in a double iamb, that is, two to one. *Ac sesquialteris* [and at the *sesquialtera*], as in the bacchius, that is, three to two. *Necnon sesquiterciis* [And also

*Octauis etiam*, id est epigdois. Primum igitur genus uocatur diapason, id est ex duplis constitutum, ut unum ad duo. Secundum genus uocatur diapente, id est sesquialtera, ut tria ad duo: habent enim tres duo in se et dimidiam partem duorum. Tertium genus uocatur diatessaron, ut sunt quattuor ad tria: habent enim quattuor tres in se et tertiam partem trium. Quartum uero uocatur epogdoos, id est superoctauus, ut nouem ad octo: habent enim nouem octonarium in se et octauam partem octonarii. De quibus omnibus hic non est laborandum quia in sequentibus quod latitat declaretur.

*Lymmata*, id est emitonia. Hoc dicit quia a Sole usque ad Lunam quidam tonos integros dicunt. Iterum a Sole usque ad Saturnum toni etiam integri dicuntur. Inde conficitur ut Sol mise, id est medium locum teneat. Quantum enim

the *sesquitertia*], as in the epitrite, as there are four to three. *Octauis etiam* [Likewise, the octave], that is, the *epigdois*. Therefore, the first kind is called *diapason* [octave], that is, constructed from a *duplum*, as one to two. The second kind is called *diapente* [fifth], that is, the *sesquialtera*, as three to two: they have three two in themselves and a half part of two. The third kind is called *diatessaron* [fourth], as there are four to three: they have four three in themselves and a third part of three. The fourth is called *epogdoos*, that is, *superoctauus*, as nine to eight: they have nine eight in themselves and an eighth part of an octave. Concerning all these things, we need not labor, because, in the following, what is hidden is made plain.

*Lymmata*, that is, a semitone [*emitonia*]. He says this, because some say the tones from the Sun to the Moon are whole [*tonos integros*]. Again, the tones from the Sun to Saturn are said to be whole. Thence, it turns out that the Sun is the *mese*, that is, it keeps a middle place [*locum*,

spatii a Sole ad Lunam, tantum a Sole ad Saturnum habetur. Quidam autem mittunt limmata, id est emitonia, uerbi gratia, a Luna ad Mercurium emitonium, et sic in ceteris. Inde dicit in sequentibus: *parili ratione*, id est tonis integris. *Aut succentibus conuenire*, hoc est, quasi succinentibus.

*Limmata*, emitonia. Intromittuntur ut non solum integri toni sint in musica caelesti, sed etiam intersunt emitonia.

“Armonia” autem dicitur ab eo quod est monos, et ar ponitur pro ad, quasi adunatio.

*Superum carmen*, id est diuinum carmen, uel carmen superiorum, id est diuinorum.

i.e., orbit]. Indeed, the space from the Sun to the Moon is as much [as] the Sun is said to be to Saturn. Moreover, certain ones disregard *limmata*, that is, the semitone. For example, from the Moon to Mercury is a semitone, and thus in the others. Thence, [Capella] says in the following section [i.e., Section 12], *parili ratione* [by like reasoning], that is, entire tones. *Aut succentibus conuenire*, this is, as if singing [*succinentibus*].

*Limmata*, semitone. They allow that not only whole tones are in the celestial music, but semitones are also present.

Harmony [*armonia*] is named after that which is one [*monos*]. “Ar” is placed for “ad” just as with *adunatio* [union].

*Superum carmen*, that is, a divine song or a song of the gods, that is, of the deities.

Saturnus igitur ad Solem dupla,  
diapason scilicet. Iterum, Sol ad Lunam  
diapason, id est dupla. Saturnus autem  
ad Lunam bis diapason, id est bis dupla  
fit, sicut VIII ad IIII<sup>or</sup> dupla. Octo  
iterum bis diapason caelestis armoniae  
plenitudo est a terra ad sidera. Sunt enim  
octo soni, septem spatia, sex toni.

Primus sonus Lunae, et deinde sursum  
uersus singularum planetarum soni  
usque ad Solem, et iterum usque ad  
spheram. Sphaerae autem celestis  
acutissimus sonus est. Sed in his  
omnibus sonis, bis diapason computatur,  
quae in quadrupli proportione  
proponitur. Sed in his omnibus non  
locorum positio sed uocum proportio  
consideratur. Nam grauissimus omnium  
sonus Saturni quoniam tardissime

So, from Saturn to the Sun is a *duplum*, that is  
to say, a *diapason* [i.e., octave]. Again, from the  
Sun to the Moon is a *diapason*; that is, a  
*duplum*. Moreover, from Saturn to the Moon is  
a double *diapason*, that is, two octaves [*dupla*]  
are made, just as four doubled makes eight. The  
fullness of the celestial harmony from Earth to  
the stars is eight [itches, but on the other hand  
it is the span of] a double diapason. Indeed, [in  
an octave] there are eight pitches [*soni*], seven  
intervals, six whole tones [*toni*].

The first sound is the Moon's, and then up  
towards each of the planets all the way to the  
Sun, and again all the way to the Firmament  
[*spheram*]. The sound of the celestial sphere is  
the highest pitch. But, in all these sounds, a  
double octave is calculated, which is displayed  
in a four-fold proportion. Moreover, in all these,  
one considers not the place of position but the  
proportionate [relationship] of the voices. For  
the lowest of all sounds is of Saturn, because it  
moves the slowest. Moreover, the highest of all

mouetur. Acutissimus autem omnium  
 sonus sphaerae caelestis, quae nimia  
 caeleritate conuoluitur. Inter hos duos  
 sonos bis diapason componitur, quarum  
 media uox in Sole constituta medietatem  
 quandam habet inter grauitatem Saturni  
 et acumen sphaerae. Sed iterum inter  
 grauitatem Saturni et medietatem Solis  
 diapason componitur. Omnis autem  
 diapason ex diatessaron et diapente  
 componitur, et sex tonos comprehendit.  
 Alia diapason inter sonum Saturni et  
 sonum sphaerae. Proinde necesse est ut  
 ex planetis quae subtus Solem sunt et  
 supra soni interponantur in hac duplici  
 diapason ratione. Post sonum Saturni  
 usque ad sonum Solis componitur  
 diapason tali modo: tonus, tonus,  
 emitonium, tonus, tonus, emitonium,  
 tonus. Vbi octo sunt soni, necesse est ut  
 septem spatia sint et sex toni, id est,  
 quinque integri et unus compositus ex  
 duobus emitoniis.

sounds is the celestial sphere, which whirls with  
 an excessive speed. Between those two sounds,  
 a double *diapason* is placed, whose middle  
 voice has been placed in the Sun, having a  
 certain intermediate course between the lowness  
 of Saturn and the highness of the Firmament.  
 Again, between the lowness of Saturn and the  
 middle course of the Sun an octave is placed.  
 Moreover, each octave is constructed from a  
 fourth [*diatessaron*] and fifth [*diapente*] and  
 includes six tones. Another octave [is] between  
 the sound of Saturn and the sound of the Sphere  
 [i.e., between the Sun and the Sphere]. Hence, it  
 is necessitated by reason that sounds are  
 introduced from the planets which are below the  
 Sun and [those] above in this double octave.  
 After the sound of Saturn all the way to the  
 sound of the Sun an octave is placed is this way:  
 tone, tone, semitone, tone, tone, semitone, tone.  
 Where there are eight sounds, it is necessary  
 that there be seven spaces and six whole tones,  
 that is, five whole and one constructed from two  
 semitones.

12		
13		
14	<p><i>Temperabat</i>. In aliis libris habetur: <i>temperabatur</i>. Sed melius <i>temperabat</i>, quia Sol omnes circulos planetarum temperat aut frigore, aut calore, aut etiam medietate quadam temperali ut in circulo Iouis. Circulus Solis a nullo circulorum planetarum temperatur, sed temperat, ut diximus. Verbi gratia: in Saturno circulo frigiditas regnat propter absentiam Solis, in Ioui temperantia propter eundem Solem, quia propinquior est Soli et est inter Martem qui est feruens et Saturnum qui est frigidus, sicque in ceteris intelligendum est.</p>	<p><i>Temperabat</i> [it is combined]. In other books, it is said to be <i>temperabatur</i> [it was being combined]. But <i>temperabat</i> is better, because the Sun tempers all the orbits of the planets, either by means of cold or heat, or even by a certain intermediate temperateness, as in the orbit of Jupiter. The orbit of the Sun is not tempered by the orbits of the other planets, but [itself] tempers, as we have said. For example, in the orbit of Saturn, coldness reigns, because of the absence of the Sun. In Jupiter, temperateness [reigns], because of the same Sun, because it is nearer the Sun and is between Mars, which is boiling hot [<i>feruens</i>], and Saturn, which is cold. And, thus, in the rest it is to be understood.</p>
15	<p><i>Ambiebant</i>, circulabant. Modo dicit de circulis planetarum. Qui circuli alios circulos aliarum planetarum intra se habent, uerbi gratia, circulus Saturni in</p>	<p><i>Ambiebant</i> [they went round], they encircled [<i>circulabant</i>]. In this manner, he speaks concerning the orbits of the planets. Which orbits have the orbits of other planets within</p>

se habet sex circulos aliarum  
planetarum, et sic de ceteris circulis  
intelligendum est.

*Inmensis finibus*: propter immensitatem  
dicit. Propter hoc dicit quia MARCUS  
TVLLIUS in Somnio Scipionis dicit  
quod omnes animae descendunt de  
caelo, et unaquaque anima habet suam  
fortunam, et in illo loco descendunt ubi  
signum Leonis est. Primo enim  
descendunt in circulum Saturni, et hoc  
est primum malum propter frigiditatem  
terrae. Deinde in circulum Iouis: ibi  
temperiem quandam accipiunt propter

themselves; for example, the orbit of Saturn has  
within itself the orbits of six other planets, and  
thus it is to be understood concerning the other  
orbits.

*Inmensis finibus* [With immeasurable  
boundaries]: [Capella] says this because of  
[their, i.e., the planetary orbits'] immensity. He  
says this, because Marcus Tullius [Cicero], in  
*The Dream of Scipio*, says that all souls descend  
from Heaven, and every single soul has its own  
fate, and they descend at the constellation Leo  
[ubi signum Leonis est].<sup>168</sup> First, they descend  
into the orbit of Saturn, and this is the first  
misfortune, because of the coldness of the  
region [terrae]. Then, in the orbit of Jupiter,

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<sup>168</sup> Cf., Cicero, *Somnium Scipionis*, §7: "For men were created subject to this law, to keep to that globe, which you see in the centre of this region and which is called the Earth; and to them a soul was given formed from those everlasting fires, which you mortals call constellations and stars, that, round and spherical in form, alive with divine intelligences, complete their orbits and circles with marvelous swiftness. So, my Publius, you and all good men must allow the soul to remain in the keeping of the body, nor without his command, by whom it was given to you, must you leave your human life, lest you should appear to have deserted the post assigned to men by God." *The Dream of Scipio*, trans. W. D. Pearman (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, and Co., 1883), 6.



temperantiam, quia Iouis dicitur salutaris in omnia. Inde ad Martem: ibi etiam accipiunt quasi malum propter furorem et maximum calorem eius. Inde ad Solem: ibi quaedam requies fit propter ingenium; est enim Sol quasi anima mundi.

*Peruadens singulas quasque.* Hic enim dicit de generalibus fortunis: generaliter enim primo descendebant in flumine, et inde ui separabantur.

*Decliuus aluei*, quasi ad uallem descendentes. Omnes animae rationabiles, quantum ad Deum pertinent et ad Deum intendunt, sine contagione sunt. Quando uero ad inferiora descendunt et corpora uel corporibus adhaerentia diligunt, uitiiis ex natura corporum assumptis adgrauantur. Et iterum, cum damnantur, redeunt in caelum quasi penitentia ducti et per

they receive a certain tempering because of moderation, because Jupiter is said to be the salvation of all. Then, [they descend] to Mars; there they receive, as it were, evil, because of its fury and extreme heat. Then, to the Sun; there is a certain rest, because of [its] nature. Indeed, the Sun is just as the World Soul [*anima mundi*].

*Peruadens singulas quasque.* He says this concerning general fortunes; indeed, they generally first descended as a stream and then were divided according to [individual] strength.

*Decliuus aluei* [Slope of a trench], as if descending to a valley. All rational souls, as long as they reach and strain after God, are without infection. When they descend to lower places and desire bodies or sticking to bodies, they are weighed down, having assumed vices from fleshly nature. Likewise, when they are condemned, they return into heaven, as if having been led by penitence, and through the same orbits of the planets they ascend, finding

eosdem circulos planetarum ascendunt, et ibi bona et mala inueniunt sicuti cum descendentes inuenerunt, et postea quasi ex carcere redeunt et uertuntur in stellas, aut etiam in inferno remanent.

*Ambiebant* igitur. Ideo hoc dicit quia nihil mali faciebant. Per istas enim omnium mixturas nil aliud intelligitur nisi felicitas aut miseria animarum. Non solum enim hoc inuenitur inter fortunas, sed etiam in unoquoque homine potest intelligi. Non enim semper mens uniuscuiusque hominis in eodem statu est, sed per uices sic, per uices etiam sic: aliquando enim bona cogitat et ibi si perseueraberit felix erit, aliquando mala et in illis si perseuerauerit mergetur et non ad ripam perueniet. Hinc dicit PLATO: Omnes animae aut redeunt in stellas, aut in homines, uel caballos, uel in quamquunque aliam similitudinem. GREGORIVS NYSEVS, germanus

good and evil, just as they found when they descended. In the end, they return as if from prison and turn [*uertuntur*] among the stars or remain in the lower region.

*Ambiebant* [they were circling]. He said this because they did nothing wrong. Indeed, through those mixtures of all things, nothing other is understood except the happiness or misery of souls. In fact, not only is this found among the destinies [of nations], but it can also be understood for each individual. For the mind is not always established similarly in each person, but it changes in response to various situations [*per uices sic, per uices etiam sic*]. Sometimes, it thinks good things and will be happy, if it will have persisted there. Sometimes, [it thinks] evil and, if it persists, it will be plunged in those places and will not reach the bank. Hence, Plato says, “All souls either return to the stars, or into men, or horses, or into whatever other likeness [sic,

BASILII, ait quia iuuenis quidam dicebat se esse aliquando sicut uir, aliquando sicut femina, uel etiam sicut uolatile, uel sicut piscis, uel sicut rana. Ideo dicit hoc propter nimiam miseriam animarum.

**DE ARMONIA CAELESTIUM**  
**MOTUUM SIDERUMQUE SONIS**

Octo sunt soni, planetarum uidelicet VII et sphaerae unus. Quorum grauissimus Saturni est, acutissimus uero spericus. Proinde sphaerae sonus sono Saturni ratione quadrupli consonat, ac bis diapason efficiunt, ut in organo uel fidibus principalis principalium et ultima excellentium. Sonus uero Solis est inter Saturnum et spheram sicut MECH inter duas praedictas cordas:

*quamquunque aliam similitudinem].”<sup>169</sup>*

Gregory of Nyssa, brother of Basil, said that a certain youth claimed [in other lives] to have been a man, a female, a flying beast, a fish, and a frog. He says this because of the exceeding misery of souls.

**On the Harmony of Heavenly Movements and the Sounds of the Stars**

There are eight pitches [*soni*], seven of the planets and one of the sphere. Of these, the lowest [pitch] is Saturn, the highest is of the sphere. Hence, the pitch of the sphere concords with the pitch of Saturn by a fourfold ratio, and they produce a double octave, as on an organ or stringed instruments [the concord of] *principalis principalium* and *ultima excellentium* [is produced].<sup>170</sup> In fact, the pitch of the Sun is between Saturn and the sphere, just like the

<sup>169</sup> Paraphrasing Calcidius 42A-D.

<sup>170</sup> This is not two octaves; Eriugena should have mentioned *adquisitus* for *principalis principalium*.

superat enim Saturnum duplo eique  
consonat diapason, superatur autem a  
sphaera duplo et aliam diapason  
componunt. Vbi mirabilis naturae uirtus  
admiranda est. Nam quod in tetrachordis  
quinis conficitur, hoc in octo sonis  
caelestibus completur. Sed qua ratione  
peragitur, diligenti indagatione  
querendum est.

Primo igitur intellige tres planetas quae  
supra Solem locorum situ sunt  
grauiorum sonituum esse. Nec immerito,  
quoniam et in amplioribus mundi spatiis  
mouentur et nimia caeleritate sphaerae,  
cui contrarium cursum peragunt, ne  
tantae uelocitatis sint, impediuntur.  
Quae autem sub Sole localiter, quoniam  
et longius a spherica uelocitate distant et  
in breuioribus mundi spatiis discurrent,  
acutiores sonos extendunt. Ac per hoc,

μέση [i.e., *mese*] between the previously  
mentioned strings: indeed, it surpasses Saturn  
twice and concords with it at an octave.  
Moreover, it [i.e., the Sun] is surpassed twice by  
the sphere and they make a second octave.  
Whereby, the power of miraculous nature is to  
be admired: For what is accomplished in five  
tetrachords is completed with the eight pitches  
of the heavens. But the plan by which [*qua*  
*ratione*] this is accomplished must be studied  
with diligent investigation.

First, understand that the three planets placed  
above the sun are the lower sounds. And, it is  
not without cause, for they are impeded from  
having such a [high] speed, because they both  
move in longer orbits through the heavens  
[*amplioribus mundi spatiis*] and [because of]  
the excessive speed of the sphere, [in relation  
to] which they complete an opposite course.  
Moreover, [the planets] located under the sun  
stretch toward the higher sounds, because they  
are both farther from the speed of the sphere

non locorum positio sed proportionis  
sonorum ratio caelestem efficit  
armoniam, presertim cum non sinat ratio  
sursum et deorsum localiter in uniuerso.  
In qualitate uero sonorum grauitas et  
acumen mediaeque uarietates  
succinentes diuersas efficiunt  
symphonias.

Fiat igitur diatonicum genus pro  
exemplo. Sol ad Saturnum diapason  
dupla ratione, sphaera ad Solem similiter  
diapason alteram reddit, ac per hoc,  
sphaera Saturno in quadrupli ratione  
consonat bis diapason. Et notandum  
quod omnis diapason octo sonis, septem  
spatiis, sex tonis consistat. Est ergo  
primus in grauioribus Saturnus, cui  
proximus Iouis tono coniungitur, Ioui  
similiter Mars tono, Sol Marti hemitonio  
et diatessaron in sesquitercia  
proportione Sol ad Saturnum consistat.

and run in shorter orbits in the heavens. And,  
through this, not the positioning of the planets,  
but the proportional ratio of the pitches  
produces the heavenly harmony, particularly  
since this ratio does not depend upon the  
position ascending and descending in the  
cosmos. Indeed, in the quality of the sounds,  
lowness, highness and middle variants produce  
different accompanying consonances

Let the diatonic genus be an example. The Sun  
and Saturn render an octave [*diapason*] in a  
duple ratio, and, similarly, the sphere and the  
Sun a second octave; through this, the sphere  
[and] Saturn resound in the fourfold ratio of a  
double octave. And, it should be noted, that  
every octave consists of eight pitches, seven  
steps, and six whole tones. Therefore, Saturn is  
first in the lower sounds, to which the closest  
[planet], Jupiter, is joined by a whole tone,  
similarly, Mars to Jupiter by a tone, the Sun to  
Mars by semitone, and the Sun to Saturn  
consists of a fourth, in the proportion of 4:3

In eisdem quoque sonis Sol ad Saturnum sesqualteram consonat simphoniam sic: a Saturno ad Iouem tonus, ab Ioue ad Martem tonus, a Marte ad Solem tonus, et habes diapente simul et diatessaron inter Solem et Saturnum. Et ne mireris Solem caeteris planetis multiplici proportionione conuenire. Diximus enim eum tribus modis concinere Saturno, in dupla uidelicet et sesquitercia et sesqualtera copulatione. Cum uideas non eisdem interuallis semper soni appropinquare sed secundum absidarum altitudinem, quid ergo mirum si Sol Saturno diapason in duplo concinat dum in longissimis ab eo distantis currit; ubi uero ceperit ei appropinquare, diapente in sesqualtera; at si ei proxime accesserit, diatessaron in sesquitercia sonabit.

[*sesquitercia*]. Likewise, in these same sounds [*sonis*] of Sun and Saturn resounds a harmonious 3:2 [*sesqualteram*, i.e., a fifth]. Thus, from Saturn to Jupiter a tone, from Jupiter to Mars a tone, from Mars to the Sun a tone, and you have a fifth and a fourth simultaneously between the Sun and Saturn. And do not marvel that the Sun joins the other planets in numerous ratios. For, we have said, it resounds [*concinere*] with Saturn in three ways: by joining in a [ratio of] 2:1, 4:3, and 3:2. Since you see [that they do] not always approach [each other] by the same intervals of sound but according to the heights of their arcs [*absidarum*], why is it remarkable if the Sun resounds in a duple [ratio, i.e., at an] octave with Saturn, while it revolves in the farthest distance from it [i.e., the Sun]? Truly, when it [i.e., Saturn] begins to approach it [i.e., the Sun], it will resound [*sonabit*] [in the ratio of] 3:2, in a fifth. But if it [i.e., Saturn] has approached closest to it [i.e., the Sun], it will resound [in the ratio of] 4:3, in a fourth.

Hac autem ratione considerata, non te mouebit, ut opinor, quod diximus etiam de Marte, tono uidelicet aliquotiens a Sole distare, aliquotiens emitonio. Quod enim ualet in cordis extensio et remissio, longitudo et breuitas, sicut in fistulis organi, in quibus spatia longitudinis uocum facit distantiam, hoc idem in planetis absidarum altitudo et a Sole elongantia aut ei propinquitas. Et quod de Sole diximus, hoc ipsum de omnibus planetis inter se inuicem intelligendum est. Non enim eisdem interuallis semper aut a se inuicem distant aut sibi inuicem appropinquant pro conditione absidarum, ac per hoc, in octo caelestibus sonis omnes musicas consonantias fieri posse credendum est, non tantum per tria genera, diatonicum, dico, chrommaticum, enarmonicum, uerum etiam in aliis ultra omnium mortalium ratiocinationem. Supra uero Solem altitudinem acuminum, infra uero

Having considered this account [*ratione*], what we have said concerning Mars, [that] it evidently stands a tone from the Sun sometimes, sometimes a semitone, will not bother you, I think. For what prevails by the tension and release of strings is similar to the length and width of organ pipes, in which the intervals of length make the difference in pitches [*vocum*]. Likewise, this [is accomplished] in the planets by the height of their arcs and [their] departures from or nearness to the Sun. And, what we said concerning the Sun, the same must be understood concerning all the planets among themselves alternately. For [they are] not always at the same distances; [they are] either standing apart from each other by turns or are by turns approaching each other, because of the nature of their arcs. And, through this, it should be believed that in the eight sounds of the heavens all possible musical consonances can be made—not only through the three genera, I mean the diatonic, chromatic, and enharmonic, but, likewise, even in others [i.e., other genera],

positionem locorum ut sensibus  
 mortalium uidetur, ita diapason potest  
 inueniri. Sol ad spheram diapason  
 coiungit, et primo habet diatessaron ad  
 Lunam, et primum ei Venus tono  
 consonat, Veneri Mercurius tono altero,  
 Luna Mercurio hemitonio. Diapente  
 uero in eisdem spatiis consonat, dum  
 Venus Soli tono, Mercurius Veneri tono,  
 Luna Mercurio emitonio, spera Lunae  
 tono respondeant.

Et notandum quod illi toni qui a terra  
 computantur ad spheram, uerbi gratia, a  
 terra ad Lunam tonus, non sint in  
 proportionibus uocum, sed in interuallis  
 locorum. Tonorum enim multae species  
 sunt. Siquidem toni sunt interualla  
 siderum, hoc est, quantum distat

which are beyond all mortal reasoning. The  
 high register of the high pitches [*altitudinem  
 acuminum*] is above the Sun, below the position  
 of places as it appears to mortal senses; thus, the  
 octave can be found. An octave joins the Sun  
 and the Sphere, and at first it [i.e., the Sun] has  
 a fourth to the Moon, and Venus resounds with  
 it [i.e., the Sun] with a whole tone [*tonus*],  
 Mercury with Venus with a second whole tone,  
 the Moon with Mercury with a half tone.  
 However, in these same distances, a fifth  
 resounds when Venus corresponds  
 [*respondeant*] to the Sun by a tone, Mercury to  
 Venus by a tone, the Moon to Mercury by a half  
 tone, the Sphere to the Moon with a tone.

And it should be noted that these tones [*toni*],  
 which are calculated from the Earth to the  
 Sphere, e.g., the tone [*tonus*] from Earth to the  
 Moon, may not be in the ratios of the pitches [*in  
 proportionibus uocum*], but in the distances of  
 their positions. For there are many kinds of  
 tones. Accordingly, tones [*tonorum*] are



unumquodque ab alio quantumque Luna elongatur a terra: qui tōni pro diuersitate absidarum et circulorum uariantur.

Quam speciem tonorum MARTIANVS diffinit dicens: “Tonus est spatium cum legitima quantitate.” Quae species in musica diastema uocatur. Sunt tōni temporum, in longitudine et breuitate constituti. Sunt tōni spirituum in spissitudine et exilitate uocum. Sunt tōni armonici, de quibus nunc agitur, in grauitate et altitudine sonorum, ex quibus omnis proportionalitas simfoniarum constituitur. Itaque, quemadmodum in organo non consideratur in quo loco sit fistula, sed qualis uox ipsius est, et quot et quibus coniungitur et quales proportionales efficit – unaqueque fistula diuersis copulata diuersas efficit simfonias – sic non locus siderum sed sonus caelestem componit armoniam. Quod uerum moueantur uoces siderum iuxta spatia absidarum,

distances between the stars, i.e., how far each [planet] is apart from another and how far the Moon is removed from the Earth. [These] tones [tonorum] vary according to the diversities of [the planets’] arcs and orbits. It is this kind of tone [tonorum] that Martianus defines saying: “A tone [tonus] is a distance with a measure, determined by rule.” This kind [of tone] is called “interval” [diastema] in music.

[Alternately,] there are tones of time [toni temporum], arranged in long or short duration. There are tones of breath [toni spirituum], defined in density or sparseness of sounds [uocum]. [And] there are tones of harmonies [toni armonici], which are now under discussion [de quibus nunc agitur], defined in lowness and highness of sounds, of which each proportion of consonances [omnis proportionalitas simfoniarum] is composed. And so, just as on an organ it does not matter [non consideratur] where a pipe is placed but what sort of voice [vox] it is, as well as how many and which [other pipes] it is joined and which ratios it

nec mirum cum et colores eadem causa mutant et cordam in breuiori et in longiori spatio positam aut extentam et remissam, cum sit eadem, non eandem uocem reddere uidemus.

Tonus autem ex tendendo dicitur, et est grecum, et diriuatur a uerbo TEINΩ, hoc est extendo. Quod uero in octauis proprie ponitur, usus musicorum fecit, quoniam omnium proportionum communis mensura est. Et ne mireris quia diximus a Luna ad Solem tonum. Non enim locorum tonos, hoc est spatia, hic consideramus, sed uocum consonantias. Dum enim rationabiliter ex grauissimo omnium sonorum,

makes – every pipe makes different harmonies joining with diverse [other pipes] – so it is not the place of the stars but the sound [*sonus*] that composes heavenly harmony. Because the pitches [*uoces*] of the stars [i.e., the planets] are moved [according to] the lengths of their arcs, it is not a marvel that their colors change for the same reason and that a string placed over a shorter or longer distance, either stretched or relaxed, seems to bring forth a different pitch [*uocem*].

*Tonus* is said [to derive] from *tendendo*; it is Greek, and it is derived from the verb τείνω, that is, “I stretch.” What is specifically meant by “octaves” is determined by the practice of musicians, because it [i.e., the octave] is the common measure of all ratios. And do not marvel that we said that from the moon to the Sun is a tone [*tonum*]. For here we are not studying the tones of positions [*locorum tonos*], i.e., the distances, but consonances of pitches [*vocum consonantias*]. For clearly, when by

Saturno uidelicet, inchoauimus, et  
 proportionali ascensione ad solaris soni  
 medietatem ascendimus, indeque  
 superius rationem extendentes, ad  
 acutissimum planetarum omnium,  
 lunarem sonitum – nec immerito,  
 quoniam angustissimum circulorum  
 omnium meatum optinet – peruenimus,  
 quo altius ascendere non ualentes, ad  
 caelestis sphaerae acutissimum omnium  
 sonorum motum ratio nos perduxit,  
 ideoque acutissimum omnium  
 planetarum sonorum acutissimo  
 extimoque totius mundi motui tonica  
 proportionione copulauimus.

Causa igitur erroris multis fit ignorantia  
 tonorum, existimantes tonum illum, quo  
 Luna distat a terra, ad proportionem  
 uocum caelestium pertinere, non  
 animaduertentes primum quidem quod  
 tonus musicus non nisi inter duos sonos  
 constituitur, terra autem quia in statu est

reason we start from Saturn, the lowest of all  
 pitches [*sonorum*], and then in a proportionate  
 climb ascend to the middle, the pitch [*soni*] of  
 the Sun, and from there extending the pattern  
 [*rationem*] to the highest [pitch] of all planets,  
 we arrive at the lunar sound, not without reason,  
 because it occupies a course [which is] the  
 narrowest of all orbits. From this height, we  
 cannot ascend [any further]; reason has brought  
 us to the movement of the celestial sphere, the  
 highest of all sounds, and we have joined the  
 highest of all sounding planets to the highest  
 pitched and outermost motion of all the cosmos  
 [*totius mundi*], in a sounding proportion [*tonica  
 proportionione*].

Thence, the cause for the error of many comes  
 from ignorance of tones [*tonorum*]. [They] think  
 the tone [*tonum*] between the Moon and the  
 Earth concerns the ratios of the heavenly voices  
 and do not first consider that a musical tone is  
 only constructed between two pitches [*sonos*].  
 But the Earth, because it stands still, does not

nullum efficit sonum, inter terram igitur et Lunam musicus tonus non est; deinde quod nunquam musica interualla stadiorum numero mensurata sunt, sed sola rationabili extentionum ascensione secundum regulas numerorum. Aliud est enim centum uiginti sex milia stadiorum mensurare a terra ad Lunam, aliud inter numerum centum nonaginta duo et ducentos XVI: XXIII<sup>or</sup> unitates. Ibi tonus est CXXVI stadiorum; hic octaua pars minoris numeri tonus est XXIII.

Vtatur ergo exemplo quodam quo manifestius appareat quod conatur asserere. In choro, ubi multi simul cantantes consonant, non locus in quo unusquisque constituitur sed proportio suae uocis consideratur. In quocunque enim loco fuerit qui grauissimam uocem emittit, necesse est grauissimam uocum

bring forth a sound; therefore, between the Earth and Moon there is no musical tone [*musicus tonus*]. Then, in as far as musical intervals are never measured by the number of *stadia* [i.e., unit of measure between the heavenly bodies], [they are measured] only in the patterned ascension of distances according to the rules of numbers. It is one thing to measure 126,000 stades from the Earth to the Moon, it is something else to measure the difference between the numbers 192 and 216, i.e., 24 units. Here, a tone is 126 [thousand] stades; there, a tone is 24, the eighth part of the smaller number.

Now, let us use a certain example, so that it may be more clearly evident what we are trying to assert. In a choir where many singers sing together simultaneously, the place where each [singer] is situated is not considered, rather, the proportional relationship of his sounding voice [to the others]. For, wherever the person who sings the lowest pitch will have been positioned,

omnium proportionem optineat. Eadem ratione, ubicunque in choro sit qui acutissimam uocem profert, necessario sonorum omnium acumen tenebit. De succinentibus similiter intelligendum, quorum non localis possitio sed proportionalis uociferatio in uniuersitate modulaminis diiudicatur. Frustra igitur localium interuallorum rationibus caelestem musicam coartari arbitrantur. In quo nihil aliud conspicitur nisi grauitatis et acuminis ascensus atque descensus. Vt enim ascendit grauitas in altitudinem decrescendo donec in acumine finem inponat, sic altitudo descendit similiter decrescendo quatenus in grauitatem terminum suum constituat.

it is necessary that he should maintain the lowest ratio of all pitches [*uocum*]. By the same reasoning, wherever in the choir might be the one who sings [*profert*] the highest pitch, he necessarily will hold the highest of all pitches [*sonorum*]. Accompanying voices [*succinentibus*] should be similarly understood; of which, not the placed position, but the proportional relationship between the voices [*proportionalis vociferatio*] is distinguished in the whole of the melody. Therefore, in vain, one considers the heavenly music to be constrained by the ratios of local intervallic distances [*localium interuallorum rationibus*], in which nothing else is seen except the ascent and descent of lowness and highness. For as a low pitch [*grauitas*] is raised by decreasing the length of the vibrating body [*altitudinem decrescendo*] until the end is reached, similarly, a high pitch descends by increasing [i.e., *crescendo*, sic, *decrescendo*] the length of the vibrating body until it reaches its lowest [pitch, *grauitatem terminum*].

Sectam platoniam antiquissimorum  
 Grecorum de lapsu et apostrophia  
 animarum. Qui ueluti omnes animas  
 simul conditas ante corpora terrena in  
 celestibus stellarum aditis delirantur,  
 quae uelocitatem caelestis sphaerae non  
 ualentes nec uolentes consequi,  
 tarditatem uero Saturni eligentes, primo  
 de celestibus sedibus in Saturni  
 ambitum lapsae sunt, deinde inchoantes  
 cadere nulla ratione retineri ualentes, per  
 diuersos planetarum circulos usque ad  
 terrena corpora cadere compulsae sunt,  
 in quibus delictorum diuersis sordibus  
 pollutae iterum ab eis resolui coguntur  
 et ad inferna descendere, hoc est ad  
 illam uitam quae carnis mortem  
 sequitur. Et quoniam extra mundum  
 nihil putabant esse, ad eosdem  
 planetarum meatus per quos animas ad  
 corpora lapsas machinabantur easdem  
 redire putabant, pristinam ueluti naturae  
 sedem reperientes.

[The following is according to] the Platonic sect  
 of the most ancient Greeks concerning the fall  
 and returning [*apostrophia*] of souls, who, as  
 with all souls simultaneously created before  
 earthly bodies, are led astray, having been  
 deceived in the starry heavens [*in celestibus  
 stellarum aditis delirantur*]. [Being] neither  
 strong enough nor willing to follow the speed of  
 the celestial sphere, they choose the slowness of  
 Saturn. First, down from the celestial seats they  
 fall into the revolutions of Saturn, and from  
 there, beginning to fall and without reason  
 strong enough to hold them, they are impelled  
 to fall through the various orbits of the planets  
 all the way to earthly bodies, in which, by  
 diverse sins and polluted by filth, they are  
 forced again to be loosened and to descend to  
 the lower regions, i.e., to that life which follows  
 the death of the flesh. And, because they [i.e.,  
 the Ancient Greeks] thought that nothing is able  
 to exist beyond the world, to these same  
 passageways of the planets, through which the  
 soul falls to a body, they thought these same

Quoniam uero corporalibus maculis  
pollutae sine purgatione quam  
ΑΠΟΘΕΩCΙΝ appellabant, id est  
redificationem, quoniam primo in  
unitate diuinitati adherebant, ut  
putabant, ad quam purgatae  
reuertebantur, illuc peruenire non  
poterant, in ipsis planetarum meatibus  
purgari estimabant, et quia aetheria  
spatia non eiusdem qualitatis sunt,  
quaedam quidem frigida, quaedam uero  
ardentia, quaedam temperata dicuntur  
esse, pro qualitate meritorum singulas  
singulis deputabant. Et meatum quidem  
Saturni Stigem uocabant, hoc est  
tristitiam: inde alludit MARTIANVS  
dicens “mestissimum deorum”  
Saturnum, propter nimietatem frigoris,  
quae Solis longinquitate et cursus  
tarditate nascitur. Martis uero meatum

[souls] were devising to return, learning, as if  
by nature, their former placement [*sedem*].

[Souls] are unable to reach [their former  
placement] without the purification called  
ἀποθέωσις [i.e., apotheosis], i.e., redeification,  
because of the corporeal stains of pollution.

[The Ancient Greeks] believed that [as souls]  
cling first to divinity in [indivisible] unity,  
[there they should] return, after having been  
cleansed, [but stained souls] are unable to make  
it back. It is in these pathways of the planets  
[that the Greeks] believed [souls] to be  
cleansed. Since the ethereal spaces are not of  
the same nature, indeed, some are said to be  
cold, some fiery hot, some temperate, they  
assigned each one [i.e., souls] individually a  
place according to their own merits. The  
pathway of Saturn is called [the river] Styx; this  
is sadness, to which Martianus alludes calling  
Saturn the “most unhappy of the gods,” because  
of its excess of cold, which comes about due to  
its distance from the Sun and the slowness of its

ΠΥΡΦΛΗΓΕΤΟΝ uocabant, hoc est ignem flammantem. In quibus duobus meatibus impias animas aut semper torqueri si nimiae nequitiae forent, aut purgari ut ad quietem quandam possent redire. Quam quietem in meatu Iouis et Veneris esse putabant, in quibus ΕΛΥCΕΟC, hoc est solutionis ex poenis campos esse putabant. Quoniam uero amoris corporum, quibus nascentibus adiunctae sunt neque in purgationibus neque in quietibus oblitae sunt, etiam purgatae redire iterum ad corpora quaedam quidem appetunt, quaedam uero spretis omnino corporibus suas naturaliter adeunt stellas, uidelicet ex quibus lapsae sunt. Ideoque ait quasdam ad ripas redditas, hoc est ad pristinum statum, quasdam uero corporibus omnino liberari. Animarum autem liberam examinationem, qua deliberant utrum ad corpora reuersurae sunt an, omni corporea habitatione spreta, ad

orbit. The pathway of Mars is called πυριφλεγέθων, i.e., fire inflaming. In these two pathways [i.e., Saturn and Mars], wicked souls are either always to be tormented, if they had been excessively wicked, or to be cleansed, and so are able to return to a certain respite [*quietem*]. This respite was believed to be in the pathway of Jupiter and Venus, in which are the Elysian fields [i.e., Ἠλύσιον πεδίον], this is what they thought to be the plains for the relaxation from penalty. But, because of love of the flesh, to which they have been yoked from birth, these souls are neither in the state of purifications nor in the forgetful rest of those having been cleansed, and seek to return again to a body. [On the other hand,] some [souls] completely despise their bodies and naturally approach the stars from which they evidently had fallen. Therefore, he [i.e., Capella] says, some [souls] are restored to the shores, that is, to a former state, some to be entirely freed from bodies. Moreover, the free balance of souls, by which it is considered whether they are going to



	<p>sedes pristinas reuersurae, per alteram furtunarum de amne in amnem et reciprocum de flumine ad flumen reditum significat. Non potuit enim liuida unda, ut ipse ait, eas retinere. Tantae siquidem libertatis est humana anima ut, si uelit in miseria manere, maneant, sin in sua cinceritate permaneat. Sat est de humanarum cogitationum miseria deque infidelium machinamentis.</p>	<p>return to bodies or, having scorned all fleshly lodging, to return to their former seat, is signified through one of the destinies [i.e., <i>fortunarum</i>] moving out of and returning to various streams. Indeed, not even a malicious wave could restrain them, as he himself said. So great is the freedom of the human soul that if it should wish to remain in misery, it remains, [and, contrariwise,] if in its integrity [<i>cinceritate</i>] it should persevere. So much is sufficient [to say] concerning the misery of human thinking and concerning the machinations of the unfaithful.</p>
16	<p><i>Latoius</i> dicitur Apollo, Latonae filius.</p> <p><i>Sugestu</i>, id est in alta sede, quia subtus aliquid geritur sicut subpedale.</p> <p>In quattuor urnulis IIII<sup>or</sup> anni tempora significantur, quae habent diuersas qualitates. Et inde dicit: <i>diuersa specie</i></p>	<p><i>Latoius</i> is called Apollo, the son of Leto.</p> <p><i>Sugestu</i>, that is in a raised seat, because something is carried below just as if below the feet.</p> <p>In the four pots are signified the four seasons of a year, which have diverse qualities. Therefore, he says <i>diuersa specie formatae</i> [shaped in</p>

	<p><i>formatae</i>, in ferro aestas, in plumbo hiemps, in argento uer, in uitro autumnus significatur.</p> <p><i>Perlucens uitri</i>. Dicunt enim fysici quia in nullo tempore aer ita nitet uti in autumno.</p> <p><i>Singulae autem</i>. Ideo hoc dicit quia unumquodque tempus sua semina obseruat. Nam quamuis non aparent semina in ieme, tamen nutriuntur in terra. Ideo folia de arboribus adueniente hieme cadunt, quia humorem arbores non habent.</p>	<p>diverse appearance]. Iron signifies summer; lead signifies winter; silver signifies spring; glass signifies autumn.</p> <p><i>Perlucens uitri</i> [translucent glass]. Indeed, natural philosophers [<i>fysici</i>, i.e., <i>physici</i>] say that air shines in no other season as it does in autumn.</p> <p><i>Singulae autem</i> [one by one]. He says this because each season observes its own seeds. Although, seeds are not visible in winter, nevertheless they are nurtured in the Earth. Therefore, the leaves of trees fall at the arrival of winter, because the trees do not have moisture.</p>
17	<p><i>Cecaumenis</i>, ardoris. Cecauma, ardor.</p> <p>Aer, inde Romani fecerunt uer, inde “uernans,” id est uirens. Ideo dicitur uer “risus Iouis” esse, eo quod tunc omnia</p>	<p><i>Cecaumenis</i> [i.e., κεκαυμένα, the torrid zone], fires. <i>Cecauma</i>, fire.</p> <p>Air [<i>Aer</i>] the Romans made spring [<i>uer</i>], thence, “vernal,” that is, being green [<i>uirens</i>]. Therefore, spring is said to be “the laughter</p>

	uirescunt et surgunt a terra. Aestatem Vulcano, uer Ioui, hiemps Saturno, autumnum Iunoni, inde a Grecis uocatur HPA propter fertilitatem. In ferro et plumbo intelligitur caliditas et frigiditas quasi duo contraria. In argento uero et in uitro quasi quaedam clementia intelligitur, hoc est in uerno et in autumnno.	[ <i>risus</i> ] of Jupiter,” because at that time all things turn green and grow from the earth. Summer [the Romans assigned to] Vulcan; spring they [assigned] to Jupiter; winter they [assigned] to Saturn; autumn they [assigned] to Juno, who is called Ἥρα by the Greeks, because of fruitfulness. In iron and lead, heat [ <i>caldicus</i> ] and coldness are understood, as though the two are opposites. Truly, in silver and in glass, a certain gentleness is understood, that is, in spring and in autumn.
18		
19	Apollo loetifer peste nubem aegena urit	Deadly [i.e., <i>letifer</i> ] Apollo burns up the needy [i.e., <i>egena</i> ], pestilential cloud.
	ΦΟΕΒΟΣ ΑΚΕΡΣΕΚΟΜΗΣ ΛΙΜΟΥ ΝΕΦΕΑΗΝ ΑΠΟΡΟΥ ΚΕΙ	Φοῖβος ἀκερσεκόμης λοιμοῦ νεφέλην ἀπερύκει. <sup>171</sup>
	ΑΚΕΡΣΕΚΟΜΗΣ compositum est ab eo quod est ΧΕΙΡ, id est mors, et ΚΟΜΙΖΟ, id est fero, hoc est: mortem	Ἀκερσεκόμης has been composed from κήρ, that is, “death,” and κομίζω, that is, “I bring,” that is, “I bring death.”

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<sup>171</sup> The version of the Greek quotation printed here comes from Lucian’s *Alexander the False Prophet*; cf. Jeaneau, 134.

	fero.	
	<i>Infularum</i> . Infula proluxa uestis et tenuissima.	<i>Infularum</i> [of headbands]. The long band of a garment and very thin.
	<i>Librico crine</i> . Ac si dixisset: humido crine. Liber enim dicitur membranula quaedam quae fixit inter corticem et arborem, inde dicitur “librico.”	<i>Librico crine</i> [with smooth hair]. As if he had said, “with moist hair.” The certain [smooth] membrane fixed between the bark and trunk [of a tree] is indeed called <i>Liber</i> , thence, it is called smooth [ <i>librico</i> ].
20	Pitho, interrogo, inde <i>Pithius</i> , ex quo dicitur Pithagoras, interrogatione non indigens.	Πείθω [persuade], inquire [ <i>interrogo</i> ], thence, <i>Pithius</i> [i.e., Πύθιος, a name for Apollo], from which, Pythagoras is called; not needing inquiry.
	<i>Properari</i> . Pene autem in omnibus libris inuenitur “prope fari,” et talis est sensus: Quamuis Musae uiderentur prope fari, id est iuxta Apollinem consonare, tamen <i>in officium Maiugena</i> e perrexerunt.	<i>Properari</i> [to be hurried]. Moreover, <i>pene</i> [i.e., <i>paene</i> ] in all books is found “to almost say” [ <i>prope fari</i> ], and this is the sense: Although the Muses appeared almost to speak, that is, to sound harmoniously [ <i>consonare</i> ] near Apollo, they proceeded still in the service of him born of Maia [ <i>in officium Maiugena</i> e, i.e., Mercury].

	<p><i>In participatum operis</i>, id est in regnum elementorum.</p> <p>Nunc uersus sequuntur. <i>Consultet</i>, id est consilium a diis petat. Sors enim dubia res est et multis modis efficitur, et maxime de futuris, atque ideo semper incertam causam significat.</p>	<p><i>In participatum operis</i> [having participated in the work], that is, in the rule of the elements.</p> <p>Now, the lines follow: <i>Consultet</i> [he consults], that is, he desires counsel from the gods.</p> <p>Indeed, fate is a doubtful thing, and it is brought about in many ways, and especially concerning future things, and, therefore, it always signifies a doubtful cause.</p>
21	<p><i>De pectore</i>. Semper legitur in aliis libris “da pectora,” et est sensus talis: Illud quod dii praeoptare uoluerunt non possumus mouere, quia fixum habent. Ideo dicit: <i>Da pectora fixis</i>, id est pectora consilia fixa</p> <p><i>Mansura uoluntas</i>. Quasi dixisset: Manebit semper in uoluntate tua consilium habere meum, sed nondum illud consilium uenit.</p>	<p><i>De pectore</i> [concerning the heart/mind]. It is always read in other books, <i>da pectora</i>, and such is the sense: That which the gods have wished to prefer, we are not able to move, because they consider it fixed [<i>habent fixum</i>]. Therefore, he says, <i>da pectora fixis</i>, that is, the councils having been fixed in the heart [<i>pectorae consilia fixa</i>].</p> <p><i>Mansura uoluntas</i> [a will to remain]. [It is] as if he had said, “It will remain always in your will to have my counsel, but that counsel has not yet come.”</p>

22	<p><i>Conscia Parnasio</i>, id est sidera quae notissima sunt cetui Parnaso, uirginibus uidelicet quae in Parnaso habitant.</p> <p><i>Cui nec tartareos</i>, id est, nec supra nec infera nec fulmina occultari ab ea possunt, quia omnia scit.</p> <p><i>Fluctigena Nereus</i>, id est, fluctus gignens, aut fluctu genitus.</p> <p><i>Fratrum</i>. Hic dicit pluralem numerum pro singulari. Sed quia legitur Mercurius supra Solem esse et tangit circulum Martis, potest hic intelligi nomine fratrum, id est Solem et Martem.</p> <p><i>Immodico labore</i>, id est sine labore aut paruo.</p>	<p><i>Conscia Parnasio</i> [known to Parnassus], that is, the famous stars associated with Parnassus, namely, with the maidens who live on Parnassus.</p> <p><i>Cui nec tartareos</i> [to whom neither Tartarean], that is, neither things above nor below nor lightning can be hid from her, because she knows all things.</p> <p><i>Fluctigena Nereus</i> [wave-born Nereus], that is, having been born of a wave, or having been born from a wave</p> <p><i>Fratrum</i> [of brothers]. He uses a plural number for one. But, because one reads Mercury to be above the Sun and bordering the orbit of Mars, this can be understood by the word <i>fratrum</i>, that is, the Sun and Mars.</p> <p><i>Immodico labore</i> [immoderate labor], that is, without labor or a small thing.</p>
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*In iusa*, id est iubet nos in sua iusa  
consentire. Vel etiam “*iniusa*,” id est, a  
nullo deorum iusa.

*Stent ardua*. Spheram celestem dicit.  
Dicunt enim stoici quod omnia  
uoluuntur, et sphaera celestis et chori  
superum. Peripathetici autem dicunt  
quod nullo modo uoluitur mundus, nisi  
chorus superum tantum.

*Inuito Ioue*, id est Ioue nolente. Hic  
sectam Caldeorum sequitur. Illi enim  
sacra mitria habebant – sacra mitria  
dicuntur sacra Solis; Mitros enim caldea  
lingua Sol dicitur – hoc est quando Sol  
per decem lineas reuersus est in  
orologium. Ignorantes autem Caldei  
uirtutem diuinam putauerunt Solem  
fecisse sua uirtute. Simili modo in  
expugnatione Gabaon.

*In iusa* [according to command], that is, “she  
orders us to agree to her command.” Or,  
likewise, *iniusa* [unbidden], that is, commanded  
by none of the gods.

*Stent ardua* [they stand towering]. He says [this  
concerning] the celestial sphere. The stoics say  
that all things orbit, both the celestial sphere and  
choirs of planets [*chori superum*]. And the  
Peripatetic [i.e., Aristotelian] philosophers say  
that in no way do the heavens [*mundus*] revolve,  
except only the choir of planets.

*Inuito Ioue*, that is, unwilling Jupiter. This  
follows the sect of the Chaldeans who had  
sacred headbands [i.e., *mitra*]. Sacred  
headbands are said [to be] sacred to the Sun;  
indeed, the Sun is called *Mitros* in the Chaldean  
language—this is, because the Sun turned back  
ten lines on the dial [*orologium*, i.e.,  
ὠρολόγιον]. Moreover, the Chaldeans, not  
knowing the divine power, thought the Sun to  
have acted by its own power. [It was] by a

		similar manner in the storming of Gibeon. <sup>172</sup>
23	<p><i>Letabunda uirtus</i>. Virtus et Minerua de uertice Iouis natae sunt. Philologia et Philoponia, id est, amor sollertii uel amor studii.</p> <p><i>De ingenito rigore</i>: Virtus enim, quae superat omne coniugium. Mirandum est quia tam magno gaudio repleta est de nuptiis, ut etiam de ingenito rigore descenderet.</p> <p>“Suppellectile” dicitur omnia instrumenta domus. Omnia enim instrumenta sapientiae studio reperta sunt.</p> <p><i>Propinqua Mantices</i>. Nam studio et sollertia humanae naturae reperta est</p>	<p><i>Letabunda uirtus</i> [Virtue, greatly-rejoicing].</p> <p>Virtue and Minerva were born from the head of Jupiter. <i>Philologia</i> and <i>Philoponia</i> [i.e., Φιλοπονία, love of labor], that is, love of skill or love of study.</p> <p><i>De ingenito rigore</i> [from engendered severity]: [It is] Virtue, who is above each marriage. It is to be marveled that she was filled with such great joy concerning the marriage that she relented [<i>descenderet</i>] from engendered severity.</p> <p><i>Suppellectile</i> [i.e., <i>supellectilis</i>, furnishings] means all the tools of a house. Indeed, all the tools of wisdom have been discovered by study.</p> <p><i>Propinqua Mantices</i> [kindred Mantice]. For, by the study and skill of human nature, divination</p>

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<sup>172</sup> Eriugena seems to be referencing two biblical accounts: Isaiah 38:8 and Joshua 10:12.



	<p>diuinatio.</p> <p><i>In ipsam quoque Sophian.</i> Ac si dixisset: Sapientia inter homines non appareret sicut apparet, nisi esset studium sapientiae.</p> <p><i>Nam ΨΙΧΗΝ incultam.</i> Omnis anima primo omnia ornamenta sapientiae perdit in tantum ut dicatur <i>ferino more</i> uiuere in siluis et de fructibus comedere, sed ex studio et ex maximo ingenio Philologiae conuersa est ΨΙΧΗC, et ideo dicitur expolita esse, id est ornata.</p>	<p>was learnt.</p> <p><i>In ipsam quoque Sophian</i> [to that one, even Wisdom]. As if he had said, wisdom would not have appeared among men as she appears, unless there was study of wisdom.</p> <p><i>Nam Ψυχήν incultam</i> [For uncultivated Psyche]. Each soul at first loses all ornaments of wisdom to such an extent that she is said to live <i>ferino more</i> [the way of a wild beast] in the forest and to eat of crops. But, from study and by means of the abundant natural capacity of Philology, Psyche was changed, and, therefore, she is said to have been refined, that is, adorned.</p>
24	<p>Catalecticum metrum constat ex spondeo, coriambo, diambo et una syllaba. Cuius exemplum est:</p> <p>“Postquam res Asiae perit procellis.”</p> <p>Feritur sic:</p>	<p>The catalectic meter consists of a spondee, choriambus, diiamb and one syllable. For example,</p> <p><i>Postquam res Asiae perit procellis</i> is beat out in this way:</p>

	<p>— — — UU — U — U — —  Postquam res Asiae perit procellis.</p> <p>— — — UU — U — U  Certum est Lauripotens decusque</p> <p>— U  diuum.</p> <p><i>Ex contiguīs</i>, ex cognatione generis.</p> <p>Vel: <i>ex contiguīs</i>, ex assiduīs consiliis.</p> <p>Semper enim nostra consilia sunt iuncta.</p> <p><i>Probare</i>. Secunda persona est, pro eo  quod est “probaris.”</p> <p><i>Quam Delio</i>. “Quam” ponitur pro “uel,”  uel pro “quantum.”</p> <p>25 <i>Inquid Virtus</i>. Hic Virtus rethorico more  conuertitur in Mercurium. Mercurius  enim primo increpabat illam quia illa  dicebat: “Nil igitur immorandum, et  caetera.” Nunc reddit uices. Mercurius</p>	<p>— — — UU — U — U — —  <i>Postquam res Asiae perit procellis.</i></p> <p>— — — UU — U — U — U  <i>Certum est Lauripotens decusque diuum.</i><sup>173</sup></p> <p><i>Ex contiguīs</i> [from touching], from kinship of  birth. Or <i>ex contiguīs</i>, from constant counsels.</p> <p>Indeed, our counsels always join [us].</p> <p><i>Probare</i> [to approve]. It is second person; it  stands for <i>probaris</i> [you are being approved].</p> <p><i>Quam Delio</i>. <i>Quam</i> is placed for <i>uel</i>, <i>uel</i> for  <i>quantum</i> [as much as].</p> <p><i>Inquid Virtus</i> [Virtue says]. Virtue, by the  custom of oration, turns to Mercury. Mercury  first rebuked her, because she said “<i>Nil igitur  immorandum</i>, etc.” [“Therefore, there is to be  no delay.” Cf., §24] Now she takes a turn</p>
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<sup>173</sup> Eriugena is referencing an example from *Ars grammatica* IV by Marius Victorinus to highlight the meter used at the beginning of §24 in *De Nuptiis*.

<p>dedit consilium ut Appollo exiret ad Iouem, sed dixit Virtus: <i>Vterque uestrum Iouem conciliat. Ille mentem</i>, id est: Appollo scit quid in Iouis mente est.</p>	<p>[<i>reddit uices</i>]. Mercury gave counsel that Apollo should go to Jupiter, but Virtue said, “<i>Vterque uestrum Iouem conciliat</i> [“Each of you persuade Jupiter”]. <i>Ille mentem</i>, that is, Apollo knows what is in the mind of Jupiter.</p>
<p><i>Secus</i> ponitur pro eo quod est “prope” uel “iuxta.”</p>	<p><i>Secus</i> [by, beside] stands for that which is near or adjoining.</p>
<p><i>Cessim</i> aduerbium est, et significat: gradatim.</p>	<p><i>Cessim</i> [bending] is an adverb and means by degrees</p>
<p><i>Remota statione</i>. Duae stationes sunt, una mane, altera uespere. Nam radii Solis cogunt Mercurium aut praeire Solem aut subsequi in signifero; aut sursum mittunt eum, et uidetur Mercurius quasi stare in uno loco, dum sursum ascendit libratus ad Solem tendens.</p>	<p><i>Remota statione</i> [distant watch]. There are two watches, one morning, the other evening. For the rays of the Sun compel Mercury either to precede or pursue the Sun through the zodiac, or they hurl him up and it seems as if Mercury stands in one place, while, [thus] having been hurled, he ascends upwards straining up to the Sun [<i>ad Solem tendens</i>].</p>
<p><i>Pia pignora</i>, id est pii filii. BEDA enim dicit: “Pignera rerum, pignora filiorum.”</p>	<p><i>Pia pignora</i> [upright pledges], that is, upright sons. Indeed, [Venerable] Bede says [cf., <i>Liber</i></p>

	<i>de orthographia</i> ], “Pledges are of matters, guarantees are of sons.” <sup>174</sup>
<i>Conuenite</i> : aut fallite, uel circonuenite, uel simul uenite.	<i>Conuenite</i> [Convene]: either deceive, or come around [ <i>circonuenite</i> ], or likewise come.
<i>Conhibens</i> , id est claudens oculos, nam Iouis non apparet, Sole aparente.	<i>Conhibens</i> , that is, closing [his] eyes, for Jupiter cannot be seen [because of] the Sun’s appearing.
<i>Allubescat</i> , consentiat uel delectetur.	<i>Allubescat</i> [he should please], he should consent or he should delight.
<i>Cum Stilbonte</i> . Stilbon dicitur rutilans uel splendens. Et dicunt fisici: cum Mercurius in coitu Iouis in quacunque parte anni, maxime in martio, tunc allubescit Iouis coniugiis.	<i>Cum Stilbonte</i> [with Stilbon, i.e., Mercury]. Stilbon is said [to be] reddening or shining. The natural philosophers [ <i>fisici</i> ] say that when Mercury meets Jupiter in whatever part of the year, especially in March, then the meeting pleases Jupiter.

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<sup>174</sup> Cf., *De Orthographica*: “Pignera rerum, pignora filiorum *et affectionum*.” Bede, *The Complete Works of Venerable Bede*, Vol. 6, trans. J. A. Giles (London: Whittaker and Co., 1843), 28.

26	<p><i>Perflatione</i>, id est: Virga Mercurii uolare Virtutem fecit.</p> <p><i>Presagire</i>, diuinare.</p> <p><i>Auguriales alites</i>. Tribus modis fit augurium ex auibus: aut numero, aut ordine, aut uoce.</p> <p>“Petasum” dicitur omne genus uolatile; dicitur enim petens sursum.</p> <p><i>Canora alite</i>. Hic non est opus intelligere ut cycni sint omnes, sed aues quasque candidas.</p>	<p><i>Perflatione</i> [draft], that is, the wand of Mercury makes Virtue fly.</p> <p><i>Presagire</i>, to prophesy.</p> <p><i>Auguriales alites</i> [Augurial birds]. Augury from birds happens in three ways: either by number, or order, or call [<i>uoce</i>].</p> <p>Every kind of winged thing is called <i>Petasum</i>; indeed, it is said, “straining up” [<i>petens sursum</i>].</p> <p><i>Conora alite</i> [i.e., <i>canora alite</i>, melodious bird]. It is not hard to understand that they [i.e., the Muses] are all swans, or any white birds.</p>
27	<p><i>Lumine quippe ueris</i>. Nam ex hoc intelligitur quia ista ascensio in uerno tempore fuit. Ideo dicit: <i>Lumine ueris</i>, id est flores qui crescunt in uerno tempore.</p>	<p><i>Lumine quippe ueris</i> [obviously by the light of spring]. For from this it is understood that this ascension was during the springtime. Therefore, he says, <i>Lumine ueris</i>, that is, flowers that grow in the springtime.</p>

	<p><i>Sudis tractibus</i>, id est puris spatiis.</p> <p>Aerem intelligit in hoc loco. Dicitur enim sudum quasi subtus udum, sicut est inferior pars aeris.</p> <p>Non est quae habeat tam pulchram uocem uti cycnus, inconuenientem tamen, sic uoces aquarum.</p>	<p><i>Sudis tractibus</i> [bright regions], that is, clear spaces. The sky is understood in this place. He says <i>sudum</i> as if below the wet [<i>subtus udum</i>], just as it is in the lower parts of the air.</p> <p>There is nothing that has such a beautiful voice as a swan, yet dissimilar, as the voices of waters.</p>
28	<p>NOMINA MV SARVM</p> <p>OYPANIH caelestis. OYPANOC caelum.</p> <p>ΠΟΛΙΜΝΙΑ, ΠΟΛΙΜΝΗΜΗ, multa memoria.</p> <p>EYTEPIIH delectabilis, a uerbo EYTEPIO, dilecto.</p> <p>EPATO, amabilis, a uerbo EPΩ, amo.</p>	<p>The Names of the Muses</p> <p>[Urania] Οὐρανία heavenly. Οὐρανός heaven.</p> <p>[Polyhymnia] Πολύμνια, πολυμνήμων, remembering much.</p> <p>[Euterpe] Εὐτέρπη delightful, from the verb τέρω, love</p> <p>[Erato] Ἐρατώ, lovely, from the verb ἐράω, I love.</p>

	ΜΕΛΠΟΜΕΝΗ, ΜΕΛΠΙΟC ΜΕΝΩΜΗΝΗ, cantus manens.	[Melpomene] Μελοπομένη, ΜΕΛΠΙΟC ΜΕΝΩΜΗΝΗ, remaining song.
	ΤΕΡΨΙΚΟΡΗ, ΤΕΡΨΙC ΚΩΡΗ, oblectatio noua.	[Terpsichore] Τερψιχόρη, τέρψις κόρη, young delight.
	ΚΑΛΛΙΟΠΗ, ΚΑΛΛΟCΠΟΙΜΗΝΗ, pulchrifica, formifica.	[Calliope] Καλλιόπη, ΚΑΛΛΟCΠΟΙΜΗΝΗ, making beautiful [ <i>pulchrifica</i> ], forming [ <i>formifica</i> ]
	ΚΛΙΩ, gloria.	[Clio] Κλειώ, glory.
	ΘΑΛΙΑ uirilis, florida.	[Thalia] Θάλεια, mature, blooming.
29	<i>Vitta crinalis</i> . De corpore illius nihil mutatum est, sed crini in radios, laurus in lampadem, uolucres in equos.	<i>Vitta crinalis</i> [hair band]. Concerning [Apollo's] body, nothing was changed but [his] hair into rays, [his] laurel into a flame, [and his] birds into steeds. <sup>175</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Capella's actual text when describing Apollo's transformation runs, "interea tractus aërios iam Pheobus exierat, cum subito ei vitta crinalis immutatur in radios, laurusque, quam dextera retinebat, in lampadem mundani splendoris accenditur, fiuntque volucres, qui currum Delium subvehebant, anhelī flammantis lucis alipedes" (Willis, *Martianus Capella*, 13, §29).

30	<p><i>Familiaris signi</i> dicit, quia Castor et Pollux fratres sunt Mercurii et Appollinis.</p>	<p>He says, <i>Familiaris signi</i> [family sign], because Castor and Pollux are brothers of Mercury and Apollo.</p>
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## CHAPTER 4

### ERIUGENA'S *PERIPHYSEON*

#### *Periphyseon* Book I

As an expansion on the foregoing discussion of music, soul, and cosmos using Eriugena's commentary on Capella's *De Nuptiis*, we now turn to portions selected from *Periphyseon*, Eriugena's greatest philosophical work. In *Periphyseon* Book I, Eriugena considers "nature that creates and is not created, and, at §474, he is in the midst of a lengthy excursus of Aristotle's ten categories, listed earlier, at §463, as essence—*essentia*, quantity—*quantitas*, quality—*qualitas*, relation—*ad aliquid*, situation—*situs*, condition—*habitus*, place—*locus*, time—*tempus*, action—*agere*, and affection—*pati*. Eriugena also explains how all the ten categories can be divided into two larger genera, motion and rest (cf., §469B). In regard to the category of condition, Eriugena states that condition [*habitus*]

quae omnium kategoriarum propter nimiam sui amplitudinem obscurissima esse uidetur. Non enim est ulla kategoria fere, in qua habitus quidam inueniri non possit. Nam et essentiae seu substantiae habitu quodam ad se inuicem respiciunt. Dicimus enim rationabilis essentia irrationabilisque qua proportionem, id est quo habitu, ad se inuicem respiciunt. Non enim irrationabilis diceretur nisi ab habitu absentiae rationis, quomodo non aliunde rationabilis uocatur nisi habitu praesentiae rationis. Omnis enim proportio habitus est, quamuis non omnis habitus proportio.

seems to be the most obscure of all the categories because of its excessive range. For there is no category in which some condition is not found. For even essences or

substances are considered mutually in respect of some condition. For we state in what proportion [*proportione*], that is, condition, rational and irrational essence are considered mutually; for the irrational could not be so called except for its condition of absence of reason, as the rational is not so called save from its condition of the presence of reason. For every proportion is a condition, but not every condition is a proportion.<sup>176</sup>

Eriugena's notion that condition is applicable to all the other categories and his equating condition with proportion (*proportione*) in some instances are discussed more fully below. For now, we should note that Eriugena considered proportion essential to the conceptualization of extremes.

Next, Eriugena goes on to propose that the possession of virtues—and even the liberal arts—constitutes a type of condition, because they are fixed in the mind and eternal. In contrast, the instability of physical bodies does not permit the designation condition. As for the category of place, Eriugena's description also emphasizes the mind, since places are in fact definitions and therefore conceptual. Eriugena then cites the seven liberal arts again, and a description of each discipline is included in this section. The definition for *musica* runs, “Music is the discipline discerning by the light of reason the harmony of all things in natural proportions which are either in motion or at rest.”<sup>177</sup>

This section, in which the liberal arts are defined (§475A–B), though consistently incorporated in copies of *Periphyseon* subsequent to Rheims, Bibliothèque Municipale, 875 (see

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<sup>176</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Periphyseon* I, CCCM 161, 36 (PL122:466A)

<sup>177</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Periphyseon* I, CCCM 161, 48 (PL122:475A-B): “Musica est omnium quae sunt siue in motu siue in statu in naturalibus proportionibus armoniam rationis lumine dinoscens disciplina.”

Chapter 2), was itself an addition to Rheims, Bibliothèque Municipale, 875 in the Irish hand *iI*. Originally, the text merely cited the liberal arts as an example of condition; the addition by *iI* expanded this point by defining the different arts. The identity of *iI* is not known definitively, and four hypotheses are summarized by Jeauneau in the introduction to his critical edition of *Periphyseon* I.<sup>178</sup> The fourth hypothesis represents the opinion of Terence Bishop, who held *iI* to be a script of Eriugena himself, and, in defense of Bishop's assertion, Jeauneau wrote, "De nos jours, c'est cette quatrième hypothèse qui paraît la plus vraisemblable."<sup>179</sup> A page from Rheims, Bibliothèque Municipale, 875 (f. 52r) featuring textual additions in the hand *iI* is displayed in Figure 1 below.

It should be noted that in this section defining the liberal arts, the wording used in the different manuscripts is not consistent in the case of *musica*. The definition quoted above is presented by Jeauneau in his authoritative, critical text, and it is the definition written by *iI* in Rheims, Bibliothèque Municipale, 875. The other manuscript traditions differ in the definition of music with regard to the ablative specifying rest (*statu*); movement (*motu*) is consistently included. For example, rest is not mentioned in the definition of *musica* in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Latin 12964:

Rheims, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 875: Musica est omnium quae sunt siue in motu  
siue in statu in naturalibus proportionibus armoniam rationis lumine dinoscens disciplina.

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<sup>178</sup> *Periphyseon* I, CCCM 161, xxi.

<sup>179</sup> *Periphyseon* I, CCCM 161, xxii.

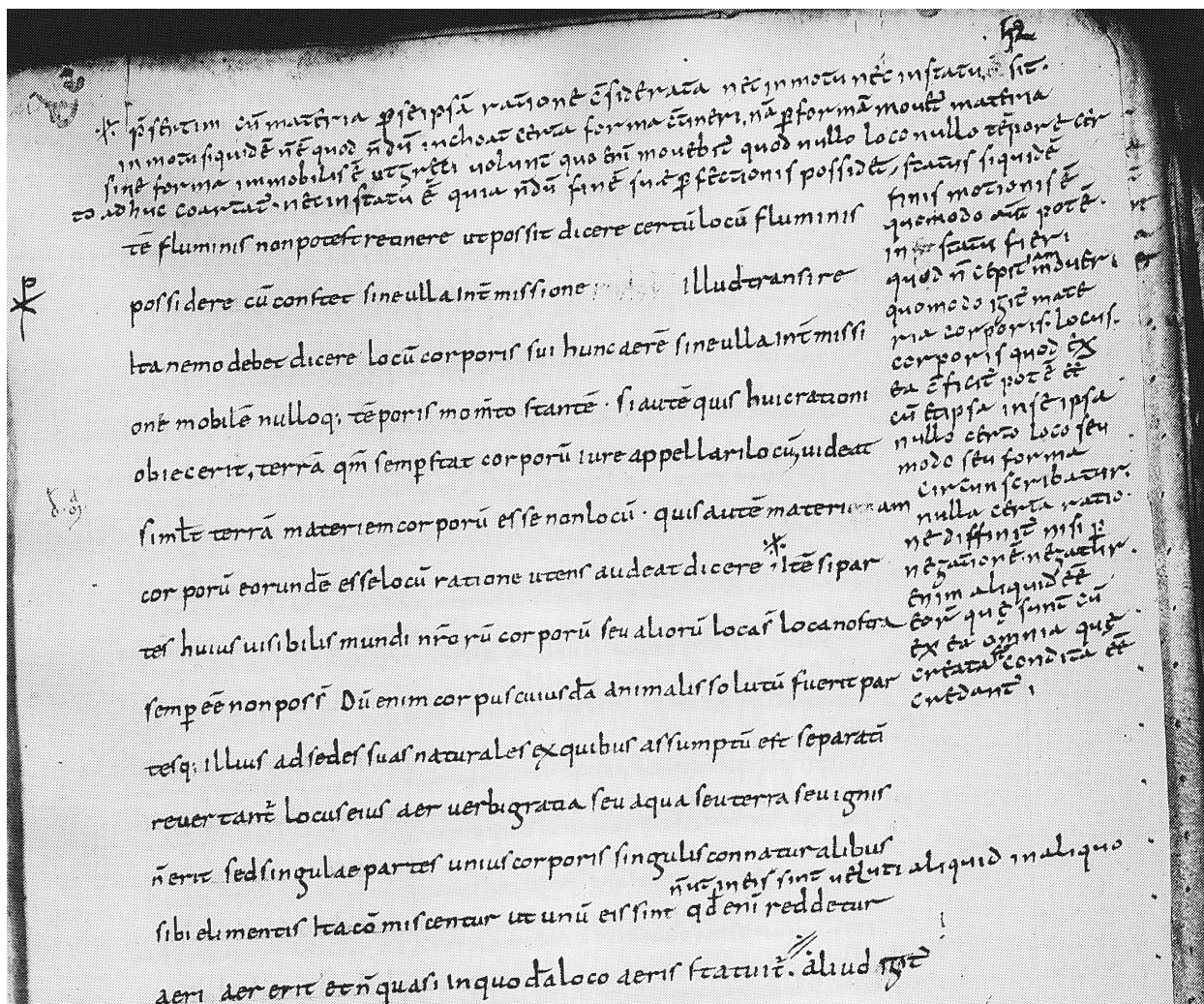


Figure 1: Rheims, Bibliothèque Municipale, 875 (f. 52r)<sup>180</sup>

Rheims, Bibliothèque Municipal, MS 875: “Music is the discipline discerning by the light of reason the harmony of all things in natural proportions which are either in motion or at rest.”

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Latin 12964: Musica est omnium quae sunt in motu scibili naturalibusque proportionibus armoniam rationis lumine dinoscens disciplina.

<sup>180</sup> *Periphyseon* I, Edvardus Jeaneau, ed., CCCM (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), vol. 161, iii.

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Latin 12964: “Music is the discipline discerning by the light of reason the harmony of all things in natural proportions which are in motion.”

Accepting for the moment the description of *musica* and the other liberal arts from the hand of *il*, it is interesting to note the broad applicability of *musica* in contrast to the other liberal arts:

Gramatica est articulatae uocis custos et moderatrix disciplina.

Retorica est finitam causam persona, materia, occasione, qualitate, loco, tempore, facultate disserens copiose atque ornatè disciplina, breuiterque diffiniri potest: Retorica est finitae causae septem periochis sagax et copiosa disciplina.

Dialectica est communium animi conceptionum rationabilium diligens inuestigatrixque disciplina.

Arithmetica est numerorum contemplationibus animi succumbentium rata intemerataque disciplina.

Geometrica est planarum figurarum solidarumque spatia superficiesque sagaci mentis intuitu considerans disciplina.

Musica est omnium quae sunt siue in motu siue in statu in naturalibus proportionibus armoniam rationis lumine dinoscens disciplina.

Astrologia est caelestium corporum spatia motusque reditusque certis temporibus inuestigans disciplina.

Grammar is the discipline that protects and controls articulate speech.

Rhetoric is the copious and ornate discipline examining a determined subject by means of the headings: person, matter, occasion, quality, place, time, and opportunity. It can be briefly defined: Rhetoric is the acute and copious discipline examining a determined subject by its seven circumstances.

Dialectic is the discipline that diligently investigates the rational, common conceptions of the mind.

Arithmetic is the reasoned and pure discipline of numbers contemplated by the mind.

Geometry is the discipline considering by acute observation of the mind the intervals and surfaces of plane and solid figures.

Music is the discipline discerning by the light of reason the harmony of all things in natural proportions that are either in motion or at rest.

Astronomy is the discipline investigating the dimensions of the heavenly bodies, their motions, and their returning at certain times.<sup>181</sup>

So defined, the broad applicability of *musica* arises from its concern with proportion (a species of the category condition when studying multiple items) whether in motion or at rest (two broad headings under which all the ten categories are divided by Eriugena, cf., §469B). Considering first the significance of proportion, Eriugena posits that many things are understood in terms of something else or composed of properties derived from two opposites; simply put, proportion is the relation of multiple objects or quantities. And, of course, most scholars of the liberal arts in Eriugena's day would have known Boethius's definition of *musica* as quantity

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<sup>181</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Periphyseon* I, CCCM 161, 47–48.

related to quantity (*DIM* II:3). Therefore, broad applicability and great significance is placed on the discipline concerned principally with proportion and ratio, if proportion is so universally employed in the ordering of the universe. Returning, then, to the section quoted above in *Periphyseon* I in which Eriugena defined condition (*habitus*):

Est igitur proportio species quaedam habitudinis. Si autem exemplo uis declarari quomodo habitus proportionalis in essentia inuenitur, ex numeris elige exemplar. Numeri enim, ut aestimo, essentialiter in omnibus intelliguntur. In numeris nanque omnium rerum subsistit essentia. Vides igitur qualis proportio est in duobus et tribus?

A. Video plane. Sesquialteram esse arbitror. Et hoc uno exemplo aliorum omnium substantialium numerorum inter se inuicem collatorum uarias proportionis species possum cognoscere.

N. Intende itaque ad reliqua et cognosce nullas quantitatis species esse, seu qualitatis, seu ipsius quae dicitur “ad aliquid,” seu situs, lociue, temporisue, agendi uel patiendi, in quibus quaedam species habitudinis non reperiatur.

A. Saepe talia quaesiui et ita repperi. Nam, ut paucis exemplis utar, in quantitibus magna et parua et media inter se comparata multa pollent habitudine. Item in quantitibus numerorum, linearum, temporum, aliorumque similium habitudines proportionum perspicue reperies.

[Nutritor:] So proportion is a certain species of condition. But, if you desire an example to show how the condition of proportion is found in essence, take the

case of numbers. For numbers, I suppose, are understood to be present in all things essentially. For it is in numbers that the essence of all things subsists. Do you see, then, what kind of proportion is between two and three?

A[lumnus]: I see it clearly. I believe it is the proportion of two-thirds [*sesquialteram*], and, by this one example, I am able to know the various kinds of proportion of all the other substantial numbers, when they are brought into relation with each other.

N[utritor]: Attend, then, to the rest [of the categories], and learn that there are no species of quantity, of quality, of that called “in relation to something,” or of situation, place, time, action, or passion, in which some kind of condition is not found.

A[lumnus]: I have often searched such matters and found it so. For, to use a few examples, in quantities when the great, the small, and the medium [*media*] are compared among themselves, condition is plainly evident. Likewise, in the quantities of numbers, distances, durations of time, and other similar things, you will clearly find the condition of proportion.<sup>182</sup>

The concepts of motion and rest that appear in his definition of music recur several more times as Eriugena continues his explanation of place by describing the cosmos with the central Earth at rest and other elements (water, air, and fire) moving about it “in unceasing rotation.”<sup>183</sup> These four elements come together from time to time to form physical bodies that are considered

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<sup>182</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Periphyseon* I, CCCM 161, 36-37 (PL122:466B-C).

<sup>183</sup> *Periphyseon* I, CCCM 161, 49.



to be in motion and accidental to the essence of their nature, which is considered at rest. More broadly, the overall participation of essences and accidents are considered a motion that will ultimately find rest in God.

Continuing on the topic of place, Eriugena cites the World Soul of Plato's *Timaeus*. In Eriugena's characterization, Plato had explained that the visible cosmos is an enormous body made up of four elements and containing a soul, which is a universal life-principle that "animates and moves all things which are in motion or at rest" (*omnia quae in motu atque in statu sunt uegetat atque mouet*). Eriugena notes that 1) the World Soul, though in motion ever animating its cosmic body, is also ever at rest, keeping "its own natural and unchanging state" (§477A), and 2) its cosmic body is also ever stable, as in the case of the central Earth, and ever moved as with the other elements by a "proportionate moderation" (*proportionali moderamine*) between the heaviness of Earth and lightness of the heavens (§477B). Eriugena concludes that place and body have to be two separate things, since body is contained within place. The implication, which Eriugena explains more fully later in *Periphyseon*, is that the cosmos, as a body, is contained within place, which, as a definition, is held in the mind (§478B). And, since a body must have a beginning, the cosmos is also contained within time, another category of the mind.

The definition of *musica* as the discipline discerning "the harmony of all things in natural proportions which are either in motion or at rest" has resonance with Eriugena's subsequent discussion of place and body, summarized above, and, to my thinking, adds credence to the theory that *iI* was, in fact, Eriugena, annotating and expanding his own work. For example, as a principle, soul animates all things "which are in motion or at rest." It appears then, in terms of its broad applicability, the definition of *musica* included in this section subtly singles out this discipline as having cosmic and metaphysical significance. Furthermore, if the dyad of motion

and rest is accepted in *musica*'s definition, the natural proportions apparent throughout the physical universe and in the movements of the soul are recognized by using categories and concepts articulated by *musica*, for Eriugena brings motion and rest to bear on each topic.

Continuing his discussion of place and time as predicates for existence, Eriugena states that "everything that is, except God, subsists after some manner,"<sup>184</sup> a point Eriugena confirms by referencing the final portion of Augustine's treatise *De musica*:

Videsne igitur locum tempusque ante omnia quae sunt intelligi? Numerus enim locorum et temporum, ut ait sanctus Augustinus in sexto de musica, praecedit omnia quae in eis sunt. Modus siquidem (id est mensura) omnium rerum quae creata sunt naturaliter conditionem earum ratione praecedit. Qui modus atque mensura uniuscuiusque locus dicitur et est.

Do you not see that place and time are understood as prior to all things that are? For the *numerus* of places and times, as St. Augustine says in *De musica* Book VI, precedes all things that are in them. Accordingly, the mode [*modus*], i.e., the measure of all naturally created things, logically precedes their condition; this mode and measure of each thing is called its place, and so it is.<sup>185</sup>

Although the citation of *De musica* in this section is brief, it is more than a passing reference. In the following, I provide a conspectus of Augustine's argument in *De musica*,

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<sup>184</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Periphyseon* I, CCCM 161, 56 (PL122:482A): "Ideoque omne quod est praeter deum, quoniam aliquo modo subsistit et per generationem subsistere inchoauit, necessario loco ac tempore concluditur."

<sup>185</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Periphyseon* I, CCCM 161, 56-57 (PL122:482B).

especially Book VI, and highlight its implications for Eriugena's dialogue in *Periphyseon*. For example, in the above quotation citing *De musica*, Eriugena mentioned *numerus* and its measure in the context of a hierarchy of existence. There is some ambiguity with regard to the term *numerus*, which can mean either "number" or "rhythm." So, to understand Eriugena's point, 1) we must understand what Augustine meant and implied by *numerus* and its measure in *De musica* and 2) discern how Eriugena read Augustine's use of the term.

### **Augustine's *De Musica***

In his *Retractationes*, Augustine stated that he began *De musica* as he prepared for baptism in Milan, in 387 CE.<sup>186</sup> It is his only surviving educational treatise and is actually unfinished; whereas the six books extant today primarily treat rhythm, Augustine intended to write about melody also. In its organization, the majority of the first five books handle the rhythms of quantitative Latin meter (considered at that time to be a branch of music, in which long syllables are measured as equivalent to two short syllables), its classifications, use in verse composition, etc. *De musica* Book VI, to which Eriugena referred, was better known in Augustine's day than the first five, and it takes up philosophical questions of aesthetics and the implications of rhythm for morals and psychology, as well as the proportionate ordering observed in the motions of the universe and soul. That *De musica* was studied as an authoritative source on music at the time of Eriugena can be observed in how it was combined with other musical texts during the ninth century. For example, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Latin 7200 (s.IX) contains the six books of Augustine's *De musica*, *De institutione musica* by

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<sup>186</sup> Dating the different portions of *De musica* is actually not so straightforward; for a summary of the different perspectives, see Martin Jacobsson's *Aurelius Augustinus: De musica liber VI* (Stockholm, Almqvist and Wiksell, 2002), xvff.

Boethius, the ninth book of Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, and a treatise on the divisions of the monochord.<sup>187</sup>

*De musica* VI begins with a prologue, in which Augustine explains that all his preceding discussions are but childish trifles and that their true worth lies in guiding the enquiring mind to this final culminating portion. Augustine distinguishes four types of rhythm (*numerus*): those in the process of being produced (*in operatione pronuntiantis*), those that are heard (*in sensu audientis*), those residing in memory (*in memoria*), and those sounding in the air (*in sono*). These types of rhythm are ordered, in terms of excellence, and a fifth superior category is introduced, those rhythms perceived by natural judgment (*numeri in naturali iudicio sentiendi*). In order to rank their types, Augustine explains how rhythms act in relation to the human soul and physical body; he concludes that both soul and body have their own rhythms (respectively superior and inferior) and that the soul cannot be acted upon by the body.

For Augustine, the loftiest action one may take with regard to rhythm is its judgment according to reason (*aestimare ratione*), the very action necessary to best pursue musical knowledge, according to his definition from *De musica* Book I: "*Musica est scientia bene modulandi*." Following Bower, I take *modulor* to signify an application of measure to musical quantity, as in rhythm, and not simply musical singing or playing.<sup>188</sup> This approach, applying measure to musical quantity, is borne out in the following quotation from §25, in which long and short rhythmic divisions are considered motions that are measured. Also, in the following, Augustine specifies criteria used for the reasonable judgment he intends: equality (*parilitas*) and symmetry (*aequalitas*):

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<sup>187</sup> Jacobsson, *Aurelius Augustinus*, xxxvi.

<sup>188</sup> Calvin Bower, *Fundamentals of Music* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989), 7n.31.

Ipsa enim, ut id potissimum dicam, quod ad huius operis susceptionem adtinet, primo, quid sit ipsa bona modulatio, considerauit et eam in motu quodam libero et ad suae pulchritudinis finem conuerso esse perspexit. Deinde uidit in motibus corporum aliud esse, quod breuitate et productione temporis uariaretur, in quantum magis esset minusue diuturnum, aliud localium spatiorum percussione in quibusdam gradibus celeritatis et tarditatis. Qua diuisione facta illud, quod in temporis mora esset, modestis interuallis et humano sensui adcommoatis articulatim uarios efficere numeros eorumque genera et ordinem usque ad modulos uersuum persecuta est. Postremo adtendit, quid in his moderandis, operandis, sentiendis, retinendis ageret anima, cuius caput ipsa esset, hosque omnes animales numeros a corporalibus separauit, seque ipsam haec omnia neque animaduertere, neque distinguere, neque certe numerare sine quibusdam suis numeris potuisse cognouit, eosque ceteris inferioris ordinis iudiciaria quadam aestimatione praeposuit. Et nunc cum ipsa sua delectatione, qua in temporum momenta propendet et talibus numeris modificandis nutus suos exhibet, sic agit: quid est, quod in sensibili numerositate diligimus? Num aliud praeter parilitatem quandam et aequaliter dimensa interualla?

For [reason], in order to focus especially on that which is relevant for the understanding of this work, first pondered over what a good modulation is [*quid sit ipsa bona modulatio*] and saw that it consists in some kind of movement that is free and turned to the goal of its own beauty. Then, it noticed that there was one thing in the movements of bodies, which varied with respect to shortness or length of time, inasmuch as it was of longer or shorter duration, and another thing that varied with respect to the beating of

local spaces, with respect to certain degrees of speed and slowness. Having made this division, it continued to turn that which was in the time-span, properly divided with well-measured intervals adapted to the human perception, into various rhythms, and, then, to turn these into kinds and into an order, all the way down to the verse meters. Finally, it [i.e., reason] directed its attention to the way in which the soul, of which it was the head, was active in moderating, activating, perceiving, and retaining these rhythms, and it separated all these rhythms of the soul from the corporeal ones and recognized that it would not have been able to observe or distinguish or, at the very least, to enumerate all these things without some rhythms of its own, and it set these above the others of inferior rank, through some kind of judicial evaluation. Now it reasons in the following way with its own pleasure, with which it inclines itself towards the spans of time and shows its will in modifying such rhythms: what is it that we enjoy in sensual rhythmicity [*sensibili numerositate*]? Is it anything but a kind of equality [*parilitatem*] and equally measured intervals [*aequaliter dimensa interualla*]?<sup>189</sup>

Augustine then runs through several examples of how the discernment of rhythmic equality and symmetry has implications for understanding the entire created order. To begin with, the soul's discernment, by reason, of what is beautiful in earthly rhythm speaks to the problem of how the soul should orient itself in the material world, where the perfect parity of God is only imperfectly imitated. In §29, Augustine explains how the motions of the cosmos point the soul toward such an apposite ordering; the planets move in perfect unity in imitation of eternity, and their rhythms unite earthly things in “the song of the universe” (*carmini uniuersitatis*):

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<sup>189</sup> Jacobsson, trans., *Aurelius Augustinus [De musica VI]*, 58–61 (§25).

Non ergo inuideamus inferioribus quam nos sumus, nosque ipsos inter illa, quae infra nos sunt, et illa, quae supra nos sunt, ita Deo et Domino nostro opitulante ordinemus, ut inferioribus non offendamur, solis autem superioribus delectemur. Delectatio quippe quasi pondus est animae. Delectatio ergo ordinat animam. “Vbi enim erit thesaurus tuus, ibi erit et cor tuum,” ubi delectatio, ibi thesaurus, ubi autem cor, ibi beatitudo aut miseria. Quae uero superiora sunt nisi illa, in quibus summa, inconcussa, incommutabilis, aeterna manet aequalitas, ubi nullum est tempus, quia mutabilitas nulla est, et unde tempora fabricantur et ordinantur et modificantur aeternitatem imitantia, dum caeli conuersio ad idem redit et caelestia corpora ad idem reuocat, diebusque et mensibus et annis ac lustris ceterisque siderum orbibus legibus aequalitatis et unitatis et ordinationis obtemperat? Ita caelestibus terrena subiecta orbes temporum suorum numerosa successione quasi carmini uniuersitatis adsociant.

Therefore, let us not look askance at what is inferior to us, but let us place ourselves between what is below us and what is above us, with the help of our God and Lord, in such a way that we are not offended by what is inferior but enjoy only what is superior. For pleasure is like a weight for the soul, and so pleasure sets the soul in its place. “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” [Luke 12:34], where your pleasure is, there your treasure will be, but where your heart is, there your beatitude or misery will be. But what is superior except that in which the highest, unshakeable, unchangeable, eternal equality exists, where there is no time, because there is no change, and from which the times are created and set in order and modified in imitation of eternity, while the celestial rotation returns to the same place and recalls the celestial bodies to the same

place and through the days and months and years and lustra and the other orbits of the stars obeys the laws of equality and unity and order? In this way, through the rhythmical succession of their times [*temporum suorum numerosa successione*], the orbits unite terrestrial things, subjected to the heavenly ones, to the song of the universe.<sup>190</sup>

Additionally, for Augustine, those rhythms we experience in our earthly life may be beautiful, but they should not be valued inordinately. Rather, pleasing, well-crafted rhythms point us toward an inherent love of order—which the soul needs—and serve as another call to embrace reason as opposed to base sensuality. When the soul internalizes physical rhythms, this faculty is called memory, and these memories are called φαντασία (or *phantasia*), whereas subsequent imaginations, using the internalized rhythms, are called φάντασμα (or *phantasma*). Augustine considers the former a movement of the mind and the latter as secondary (a movement produced by another movement) and, therefore, deceptive and untrustworthy. Similarly, the mind is better served by orienting itself upward toward spiritual rhythms and contemplation of God, since such contemplations are trustworthy and, in fact, impart health to our physical existence.

In §43, Augustine states that orienting the soul toward God is a matter of properly ordered love, to which all the movements and rhythms of human life are to be directed:

Quid, me putas hinc diutius debere dicere, cum diuinae scripturae tot uoluminibus et tanta auctoritate et sanctitate praeditae nihil nobiscum aliud agant, nisi ut diligamus Deum et Dominum nostrum ex toto corde et ex tota anima et ex tota mente et diligamus proximum

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<sup>190</sup> Jacobsson, trans., *Aurelius Augustinus [De musica VI]*, 66.



nostrum tamquam nosmet ipsos? Ad hunc finem igitur si omnes illos humanae actionis motus numerosque referamus, sine dubitatione mundabimur.

Now, do you think that I should speak at length about this, when the holy Scriptures in so many volumes and with such authority and sanctity tell us nothing but this, that we shall love our God and Lord with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind and love our neighbor as ourselves [Luke 10:27]? Thus, if we direct all these movements and rhythms [*motus numerosque*] of our human activity to this end, we will undoubtedly be purified.<sup>191</sup>

In the final sections of *De musica*, Augustine expounds three final instances of reading rhythmic equality and proportionate ordering into other aspects of creation. 1) He references the construction of particles of earth that display “corrationality” (*conrationalitas*, Augustine’s translation of ἀναλογία, in Book VI).<sup>192</sup> 2) The ordering of the elements in terms of excellence displays an overall harmony (*concordia*). For example, air strives for unity with greater facility than earth or water and is, therefore, superior, and the planets display the limit and supreme splendor of unified bodies. 3) The entire process of deification is itself a rhythm entailing equality, similarity, and order:

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<sup>191</sup> Jacobsson, trans., *Aurelius Augustinus [De musica VI]*, 90. Augustine states the matter more simply, in §46: “The soul maintains its order by loving with its whole self what is superior to it, that is to say God, but its fellow souls as itself.” (Tenet ordinem ipsa tota diligens quod se supra est, id est Deum, socias autem animas tamquam se ipsam.)

<sup>192</sup> To be clear, Augustine had translated ἀναλογία as *proportio* earlier in his treatise, in Book I. I discuss more thoroughly the differences between the terms λόγος (Lat. *proportio*, Eng. ratio) and ἀναλογία (Lat. *proportionalitas* or *analogia*, Eng. proportion) in Chapter 5.

Deus autem summe bonus et summe iustus nulli inuidet pulchritudini, quae siue damnatione animae, siue regressione, siue permansione fabricatur. Numerus autem et ab uno incipit et aequalitate ac similitudine pulcher est et ordine copulatur. Quam ob rem, quisquis fatetur nullam esse naturam, quae non, ut sit quidquid est, adpetat unitatem suique similis, in quantum potest, esse conetur atque ordinem proprium uel locis, uel temporibus, uel incorporeo quodam libramento salutem suam teneat, debet fateri ab uno principio per aequalem illi ac similem speciem diuitiis bonitatis eius, qua inter se unum et de uno unum carissima, ut ita dicam, caritate iunguntur, omnia facta esse atque condita quaecumque sunt, in quantumcumque sunt.

But the supremely good and supremely just God does not look askance at any beauty, which is created either as a consequence of the damnation or the returning or the remaining of the soul. But the rhythm both begins from the one and is beautiful through equality and similarity and is united in order. Therefore, whoever admits that there is no nature that does not desire unity in order to be what it is, or that does not try, to the best of its ability, to be similar to itself and to keep its proper order, either spatially or temporally or in some kind of incorporeal balance, as its health, must admit that all things, whatever they are, inasmuch as they exist, have been made and created from one origin, through a form, equal and similar to this origin by the riches of its goodness, through which they are united with each other as one, and, as one from the one, by the loveliest love, so to speak.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Jacobsson, trans., *Aurelius Augustinus [De musica VI]*, 110.

In a fascinating comment at the close of this book, Augustine goes beyond the moving planets and the soul's quest for theosis and comments, all too briefly, on the rational and intellectual rhythms of "the blessed and holy souls" (§58). As he later clarified in his *Retractationes*, Augustine is here referring to the angels who mediate as messengers between God and man.<sup>194</sup> And, remembering Eriugena's definition of *musica*, it is fascinating to note how Augustine reads "a harmony of all things" in the rhythms of place that are at rest and the rhythms of time that are in motion; the harmony consists of their ordering in progression.<sup>195</sup>

Ista certe omnia, quae carnalis sensus ministerio numeramus, et quaecumque in eis sunt, locales numeros, qui uidentur esse in aliquo statu, nisi praecedentibus intimis in silentio temporalibus numeris, qui sunt in motu, nec accipere possunt nec habere. Illos itidem in temporum interuallis agiles praecedit et modificat uitalis motus seruiens Domino rerum omnium, non temporalia habens digesta interualla numerorum suorum sed tempora ministrante potentia, supra quam rationales et intellectuales numeri beatarum animarum atque sanctarum legem ipsam Dei, sine qua folium de arbore non cadit, et cui nostri capilli numerati sunt, nulla interposita natura excipientes usque ad terrena et inferna iura transmittunt.

Certainly, all these things that we enumerate [*numeramus*], by the work of carnal sense, and all things in them, can neither receive nor possess a local rhythm [*locales numeros*],

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<sup>194</sup> Augustine, *Retractiones*, trans. M. Bogan, in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 60 (Washington, Catholic University of America Press, 1968) 48.

<sup>195</sup> Augustine, *De musica*, trans. Robert Taliaferro, in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 4 (Washington, Catholic University of America Press, 1947) 378n.22.

which seems to be in a certain rest [*aliquo statu*], unless the inmost temporal rhythms, which are in motion [*motu*], silently precede. Likewise, the vital movement serving the Lord of all things precedes and modifies them in swift intervals of time, not having the temporally arranged intervals of their rhythms [*numerorum*], but with a power that gives the times, over which power the rational and intellectual rhythms [*numeri*] of the blessed and holy souls, without any intervening nature, receive the law of God—without which not a single leaf falls from a tree and for whom our hairs are counted—and transmit it to the earthly and infernal laws.<sup>196</sup>

It is to this final portion of *De musica*, in which Augustine alludes to the celestial hierarchy, that I believe Eriugena was referring when he wrote, “For the *numerus* of places and times . . . precedes all things that are in them.” And it is important to note that *numerus* as used by Augustine should be translated as “rhythm,” for that is the most common sense in which he uses the term throughout *De musica* and in this portion. In contrast, as I demonstrate in the next section, Eriugena uses *numerus* as “number,” but with implications derived from the study of rhythm.

To summarize the discussion thus far, we have seen how motion and rest in Eriugena’s definition of *musica* distinguish the study of music with broad applicability that includes the music of the celestial spheres and the motions of the soul. We have noted Eriugena’s use of Augustine’s *De musica* VI and, specifically, the term *numerus*, which, for Augustine, had implications for anything in motion or at rest. For example, learning the criteria to judge the

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<sup>196</sup> Jacobsson trans., *Aurelius Augustinus [De musica]*, 114–16.

movements and ordering of rhythm had implications for everything from the rhythms that please our bodily senses to the rhythms of even the celestial hierarchy.

The harmonious ordering of the celestial hierarchy is the primary topic of Chapter 5, in which I take up Eriugena's translation of and commentary on Pseudo-Dionysius's *Expositiones in Hierarchiam Caelestem*. As preparation for that discussion and to build upon the material presented thus far, I return briefly to Martianus Capella's *De Nuptiis (DN)* Book IX (*Harmonia*), the musical treatise Eriugena knew well and glossed extensively. There, in *DN IX* and associated ninth-century glosses, we can confirm a connection between metaphysical motion, cosmic motion, and rhythmic measure, thus highlighting a specific instance where the study of music, soul, and cosmos intersect in ninth-century thought. We can also confirm Eriugena's use of *numerus* as "number" with associations derived from the study of musical rhythm.

### **Rhythmic Measure and Metaphysical Motion**

At §930, in *DN IX*, *Harmonia* asserts, "My province comprises the skill of properly modulating/regulating [*bene modulandi*] what is contained in both rhythmic and melodic compositions . . . ,"<sup>197</sup> and, at the end of §966, she addresses the topic of rhythm specifically. In the following quotation (§966-§969), Capella uses the term *numerus* as ordered measures comprising long and short durations (as it was for Augustine in *De musica*). *Harmonia* declares:

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<sup>197</sup> Martianus Capella, *De Nuptiis*, trans. William Stahl and Richard Johnson, in *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts*, vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 359. For Capella's Latin see *Martianus Capella*, ed. James Willis (Leipzig: Teubner, 1983), 356: "Et quoniam officium meum est bene modulandi sollertia quae rithmicis et melicis astruccionibus continetur." Note Capella's use of "*bene modulandi*" as in Augustine's definition of *musica* quoted above.

Nunc *rhythmos*, hoc est *numeros*, perstringamus, quoniam ipsam quoque nostri portionem esse non dubium est. *rhythmus* igitur est compositio quaedam ex sensibilibus collata temporibus ad aliquem habitum ordinemque conexa. rursum sic definitur: *numerus* est diversorum modorum ordinata conexio, temporis pro ratione modulationis inserviens, per id quod aut efferenda vox fuerit aut premenda, et qui nos a licentia modulationis ad artem disciplinamque constringat. interest tamen inter *rhythmus* et *rhythmizomenon*: quippe *rhythmizomenon* materia est numerorum, *numerus* autem velut quidam artifex aut species modulationis apponitur. omnis igitur *numerus* triplici ratione [dicitur] discernitur: visu audituque vel tactu. Visu, sicut sunt ea, quae motu corporis colliguntur; auditu, cum ad iudicium modulationis intendimus; tactu, ut ex digitis venarum exploramus indicia. verum nobis attribuitur maxime in auditu visuque. sed *rhythmicæ* est ars omnis in numeris, quae *numeros* quosdam propriae conversionis accipiat. flexusque legitimos sortiatur. est quoque distantia inter *rhythmus*. *metrum*que non parva, sicut posterius memorabo. sed quia visus auditusque numero dictus accedere, hi quoque in tria itidem genera dividuntur: in corporis motum, in sonorum modulandique rationem atque in verba, quae apta modis ratio colligarit; quae cuncta sociata perfectam faciunt cantilenam. dividitur sane *numerus* in oratione per syllabas, in modulatione per arsin ac thesin; in gestu figuris determinatis schematisque completur.

Now, let us consider rhythm [*rhythmos*], i.e., *numerus*, since, without a doubt, it is a branch of my discipline. Rhythm [*rhythmus*] is a grouping of times that are perceptible to the senses and are arranged in some orderly manner. Or, *numerus* may be defined as the orderly arrangement of different measures [*modorum*]. It is subordinate to time, in

accordance with the plan of modulation [*pro ratione modulationis*], by which the voice is raised or lowered and which restrains us from modulatory license [*a licentia modulationis*], in accordance with my discipline and art. There is a difference between rhythm [*rhythmus*] and that which has become rhythmic [*rhythmicizomenon*]. The latter is indeed the material of rhythms [*numerorum*], whereas, rhythm [*numerus*] is considered to be the artificer or a form of modulation [*modulationis*]. All rhythm [*numerus*] is reasonably divided into three categories: visual, auditory, or tactile. An example of the visual is in bodily movements [*motu corporis*]; of auditory, we hold as an appraisal of modulation [*modulationis*]; of tactile, when we look for symptoms by feeling the pulse. The most important categories for us are the auditory and the visual. The art of rhythemics [*rhythmicæ*] is entirely in rhythms [*numerus*]; it admits certain rhythms [*numeros*] with appropriate variations and selects legitimate substitutions. The difference between rhythm and meter [*rhythmus metrumque*] is no small one, as I shall remember [to explain] later. Since, as has been said, rhythm [*numero*] involves the visual and auditory senses, these too may be divided into three types: into bodily motion [*corporis motum*]; into the planning of sounds and their modulations [*modulandi*]; and into words, which are grouped by apt reason into measures [*modis*] and which, when combined, produce a perfect song. Rhythm [*numerus*] in public speaking is divided by syllables; in modulation [*modulatione*], by arsis and thesis; and in gesture [*gestu*], by forms and determinate motions [*schemata*] that are completed.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> MacInnis, trans., Willis, *Martianus Capella*, 372–73. Capella defines *schemata* as motion in §971.

A gloss in the ninth-century Anonymous commentary on the words *corporis motum* in this quotation verifies an integral understanding of motion to the definition of music: “*Omnis musica in motum est.*”<sup>199</sup> Additionally, the Anonymous commentary and Eriugena’s own glosses on *DN IX* also establish an application of the ordered motion in the study of musical rhythm to the celestial spheres and to the soul. For example, in an earlier passage in *DN IX*, at §922, Harmonia begins her discourse with the whirling celestial spheres and the first emanations of souls from the One:

Dum me quippe germanam gemellamque caelo illa incogitabilis effigientiae genuisset immensitas, sidereae revolutionis excursus atque ipsa totius molis volumina comitata, superos incitosque fulgores modis associans numeros non reliqui. sed cum illa monas intellectualisque lucis prima formatio animas fontibus emanantes in terrarum habitacula rigaret, moderatrix earum iussa sum demeare. denique numeros cogitabilium motionum totiusque voluntatis impulsus ipsa rerum dispensans congruentiam temperabam.

From the time that the immeasurable [universe] of the ineffable Creator begot me as the twin sister of heaven, I have not forsaken *numeros*; having run along the sidereal courses and accompanied the rolling motion of the entire structure assigning measures [*modis associans*] to the rushing and brilliant celestial bodies. But, when the Monad and [first hypostasis] of intellectual light was scattering the many souls that emanated from their

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<sup>199</sup> Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 533. The so-called Anonymous commentary of glosses on Capella’s *DN* is considered to be the oldest from the Carolingian era. This gloss tradition is the special concern of Mariken Teeuwen’s *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres* in which she presents a critical edition of these glosses upon *DN* Books I, II, and IX.



original source to earthly habitations, I was ordered to descend with them to be their mistress. It was I who designated the *numeros* of conceivable motions [*cogitabilium motionum*] and the impulses of the whole will, blending symmetry [*congruentiam*] into all things.<sup>200</sup>

As for the cosmos, a gloss in the Anonymous commentary on *modis associans* (see above) reads “*modulationibus rithmos iungens*,” thereby, coupling the ordered motions of the heavens to the concept of rhythmic organization.<sup>201</sup> Additionally, Eriugena himself glossed *pulsibus (modulorum machinae)*, i.e., the pulsating rhythms of the celestial machine, in the preceding section (§921), as *tonis motibus*, “tone motion.”<sup>202</sup>

Also, in the above quotation, Harmonia is declared to have power over souls, and it is suggested in the Anonymous commentary that this power comes from Harmonia’s sister Arithmetica or the gods; the word *moderatrix* is glossed “*Ego habens potestatem illarum animarum a mea germana vel a diis*.”<sup>203</sup> (Both Eriugena and the Anonymous commentary agree that Arithmetic is Harmony’s twin sister.) This power or rule over human souls is explained further in a gloss on *numeros (cogitabilium motionum)*, in the Anonymous commentary, as an aspect of the quadrivium. In the quotation below, it is fascinating to note the consideration of incorporeal motions of the soul, specified in the definition of *musica*, and that the word being glossed is *numeros*:

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<sup>200</sup> MacInnis, trans., Willis, *Martianus Capella*, 353–54.

<sup>201</sup> Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 477.

<sup>202</sup> Lutz, *Annotationes in Marcianum*, 202.

<sup>203</sup> Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 478.

NUMEROS Data est mihi potestas non solum corporum sed etiam animarum: utrum cogitaremus nunc ista nunc illa. Arithmetica in statu, geometrica in figuris, musica in omnium rerum corporalium et incorporalium motu, astrologia in ratione corporum celestium versatur.

*Numeros*: Rule has been given to me [i.e., to Harmonia] not only of bodies, but also of souls, whether we think now of this or that. Arithmetic considers rest, Geometry considers shapes, Music considers the motion of all corporeal and incorporeal things, Astrology considers the plan of the celestial bodies.<sup>204</sup>

As stated above, *numerus* can mean “rhythm” or “number,” and “number” appears to be the sense in which *numeros* was read by this Anonymous commentator, at *DN* §922, since number is inherent to the quadrivium, to which he refers, and Harmonia’s power ostensibly comes from Arithmetica, whose discipline considers only numbers. And, while acknowledging the ordered motions of the spheres and souls, it appears that Eriugena also understood this instance of *numeros* as “number,” e.g., in the following glosses that Eriugena composed on this same portion of *DN* IX:

GERMANAM GEMELLAMQUE CAELO ut intelligas concreatam caelo esse  
Armoniam, aut GEMINAM GEMELLAMQUE dicit Arithmetica et Armoniam  
quoniam ex numeris et modis tota musica conficitur.

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<sup>204</sup> MacInnis, trans., Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 478.

*Germanam gemellamque caelo* [celestial twin sister] you should understand as created in heaven together with Harmonia. Or he calls Arithmetic and Harmony *geminam gemellamque*, because from number [*numeris*] and measures [*modis*] all music is made.<sup>205</sup>

Eriugena's note makes better sense, i.e., the relationship between Arithmetic and Harmony is clearer, if *numeris* means number. Additionally, from Eriugena's subsequent comments, on §922, we learn that from *numerus*, considered as "number," both *musica* and souls are made:

PRIMA condicio ex quibus animarum numerositas in terrena corpora diffluere physicorum doctrina astruit. Possumus etiam monadem et intellectualem lucem pro uno accipere quoniam omnia ex monade in infinitum multiplicantur. FORMATIO conditio. FONTIBUS EMANANTES id est in numeris suis fluentes; FONTIBUS hoc est numeris. Plato siquidem in Thymaeo ex multiplicibus et superparticularibus numeris generalem mundi animam creari docet, quae una per singulas dividitur animas, sive rationales sive irrationales.

*Prima*, the situation from which the multitude [*numerositas*] of souls added an earthly body [which will eventually] dissolve, according to the doctrine of the natural philosophers. We are able to accept the monad and intellectual light for the One, because all things are multiplied from the monad to infinity. *Formatio*, situation. *Fontibus*

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<sup>205</sup> MacInnis, trans., Lutz, *Annotationes in Marcianum*, 202.

*emanantes*, i.e., flowing in their numbers [*numeris*]. *Fontibus*, i.e., numbers [*numeris*].

Accordingly, Plato, in *Timaeus*, taught that from composite and superparticular numbers [*numeris*] the World Soul was created, from which unity individual souls are divided, whether rational or irrational.<sup>206</sup>

In conclusion, although Eriugena's reading of *numerus* appears to be as "number" (and specifically, ratio) in this gloss, and that sense does fit his use of the term in *Periphyseon* I when quoting Augustine ("For the *numerus* of places and times ... precedes all things that are in them"), a musical understanding of rhythm is not absent. Specifically, Eriugena uses Augustine's idea of overall harmony achieved by the proportionate ordering of motions.

I turn next to *Periphyseon* III, in which Eriugena describes the creation of the world in all its visible and invisible complexity, using examples from the qualities of numbers and using arguments derived from Augustine's *De musica* VI, which he quotes again. Indeed, throughout *Periphyseon* III, Eriugena employs the language of proportionate measure and ordered motion, concepts that we have seen are articulated in the discipline of music for rhythm.

### ***Periphyseon* Book III**

In *Periphyseon* Book III, Eriugena describes "nature that is created and does not create," and, beginning with the Primordial Causes, he advances through the topics of the Created Effects and Creation from Nothing. At §630, Eriugena explains the progression of all things from God to base matter and notes that participation characterizes the entire sequence, except for God, who is merely participated in as source. For example, in the following quotation, participation along the chain of being is described in terms of concordant numerical proportions:

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<sup>206</sup> MacInnis, trans., Lutz, *Annotationes in Marcianum*, 202.

Participatio uero in omnibus intelligitur. Vt enim inter numerorum terminos (hoc est inter ipsos numeros sub una ratione constitutos) similes proportiones, ita inter omnes ordines naturales a summo usque deorsum participations similes sunt, quibus iunguntur. Et quemadmodum in proportionibus numerorum proportionalitates sunt (hoc est proportionum similes rationes), eodem modo in naturalium ordinationum participationibus mirabiles atque ineffabiles armonias constituit creatrix omnium sapientia, quibus omnia in unam quandam concordiam, seu amicitiam, seu pacem, seu amorem, seu quocunque modo rerum omnium adunatio significari possit, conueniunt. Sicut enim numerorum concordia proportionis, proportionum uero collatio proportionalitatis, sic ordinum naturalium distributio participationis nomen, distributionum uero copulatio amoris generalis accepit, qui omnia ineffabili quadam amicitia in unum colligit. Est igitur participatio non cuiusdam partis assumptio, sed diuinarum dationum et donationum a summo usque deorsum per superiores ordines inferioribus distributio.<sup>207</sup>

But participation is understood of all. For, as between the terms of numbers [*numerorum*], that is, among the numbers when they are constituted under one principle, the proportions are similar, so between all the natural orders from the highest to the lowest the participations by which they are related are similar; and, as between the numerical proportions [*proportionibus numerorum*] there are the proportionalities [*proportionalitates*], that is to say, similar principles of proportion; in the same way, the Wisdom, that is, the Creator of all things, has constituted marvelous and ineffable

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<sup>207</sup> *Periphyseon* III, CCCM 163, 18–19.

harmonies between the participations of the natural orders, by which all things come together into one concord or amity or peace or love or whatever other name can signify the unification of all things. For, just as the concord of numbers [*numerorum concordia*] has been given the name proportion, but the bringing together of the proportions is called proportionality, so the distribution of the natural orders has been given the name of participation, but the bringing together of the distributions is called universal Love, which in a kind of ineffable amity gathers all things into one. Participation, therefore, is not the taking of some part, but the distribution of the divine gifts and graces from the highest to the lowest through the higher orders to the lower.<sup>208</sup>

Eriugena's description of the "natural orders" follows closely Augustine's argument, in *De musica* §56. For example, Augustine had described participants in the chain of being as keeping a balanced, proper order. So too, Eriugena notes a constituted order, and, like Augustine, sees the chain as communicating grace and goodness to all its parts, goodness in their existence and grace in their beauty. For Augustine and Eriugena, the order of the entire sequence is proportionate and equal, thus producing a concord that encompasses every part. Additionally, this encompassing concord, for both Augustine and Eriugena, is described in terms of love.

Furthermore, Augustine emphasized an ordered motion, a rhythm within the system from start to finish, but Eriugena, though acknowledging movement within the sequence of the chain of being, focuses more on the proportions measurable between the individual parts of the whole system, as in his account of the cosmic system, described in Chapter 3. For example, 1) in his *De musica*, Augustine wrote, at §42, "Thus, the movements that the soul exerts, with the souls that

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<sup>208</sup> Sheldon-Williams, trans., *Periphyseon* III, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 11, 53–55.

adhere to it and are subject to it, are similar to the progressing [rhythms].”<sup>209</sup> 2) Nearing the end of *Periphyseon* III, while specifically citing the progressions and hierarchy of *numerus* in Augustine’s *De musica*, Eriugena’s sense for *numerus* is that of individuated particulars, not rhythms (§731–2.). Indeed, number (*numerus*) in the sense of individual or particular is very important to Eriugena’s argument throughout *Periphyseon* III, especially to show how all things are both created and eternal; by analogy, numbers are eternal in the monad and created in their multiplications.

Eriugena’s reliance on Augustine’s dialogue on rhythm is also evident in the following quotation, which contains the occurrence of *organicum melos*, explained in Chapter 3. In this portion, Eriugena describes a harmonic order to all things in the relation of similar and dissimilar parts:

Proinde pulchritudo totius uniuersitatis conditae similibus et dissimilibus mirabili quadam armonia constituta est, ex diuersis generibus uariisque formis, differentibus quoque substantiarum et accidentium ordinibus in unitatem quandam ineffabilem compacta. Vt enim organicum melos ex diuersis uocum qualitatibus et quantitibus conficitur dum uiritim separatimque sentiuntur longe a se discrepantibus intentionis et remissionis proportionibus segregatae, dum uero sibi inuicem coaptantur secundum certas rationabilesque artis musicae regulas per singulos tropos naturalem quandam dulcedinem reddentibus, ita uniuersitatis concordia ex diuersis naturae unius subdiuisionibus a se

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<sup>209</sup> MacInnis, trans., Jacobsson, *Aurelius Augustinus*, 88: “Motus igitur, quos exerit anima de inhaerentibus sibi et subditis animis, progressoribus illis sunt similes.”

inuicem dum singulariter inspiciuntur dissonantibus, iuxta conditoris uniformem uoluntatem coadunata est.<sup>210</sup>

Furthermore, the beauty of the whole established universe consists of a marvelous harmony of like and unlike, in which the diverse genera and various species and the different orders of substances and accidents are composed into an ineffable unity. For, as *organicum melos* is made up of a variety of qualities and quantities of sounds, which, when they are heard individually and separately, are distinguished from one another by widely differing proportions of rising and falling (*intentionis et remissionis*),<sup>211</sup> but, when they are attuned to each other, in accordance with the fixed and rational rules of the art of music, give forth a natural sweetness through each piece of music, so the harmony of the universe is established in accordance with the uniform will of its Creator out of the diverse subdivisions of its one nature, which, when regarded individually, clash with one another.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> *Periphyseon* III, CCCM 163, 29.

<sup>211</sup> Here, the mention of rising and falling (*intentionis et remissionis*) is reminiscent of the opening section in *Musica enchiridis*: “Ptongi autem non quicumque dicuntur soni, sed qui legitimis ab invicem spaciis melo sunt apti. Eorum quidem sic et *intendendo et remittendo* naturaliter ordo continuatur, ut semper quattuor et quattuor eiusdem conditionis sese consequantur.” (“Not all sounds (*soni*) are called tones (*ptongi*), only those that are suitable for melody by proper spacing from each other. A series of them are joined, naturally ascending and descending, so that they follow each another, always in similarly constituted groups of four.) (MacInnis, trans., *Musica enchiridis*, *Thesaurus Musicarum Latinarum*, accessed 10 March 2014, [http://www.chmtl.indiana.edu/tml/9th-11th/MUSENCI\\_TEXT.html](http://www.chmtl.indiana.edu/tml/9th-11th/MUSENCI_TEXT.html). Cf., Erickson, trans., *Musica Enchiridis and Scholica Enchiridis*, 1-2.)

<sup>212</sup> Sheldon-Williams, trans., *Periphyseon* III, *SLH* 11, 69–71.



As Teeuwen notes, polyphonic practice is described in this passage, though no specific technique can be ascertained.<sup>213</sup> Eriugena's argument is that, as sung polyphony involves the regulation of diverse parts, differences and apparent oppositions throughout the universe are harmonized when considered in relation to each other; i.e., individual proportions must be considered in terms of the entire system. Similarly, for Augustine, the beauty of rhythmicity, however discerned, is in its equality and equally measured intervals and by considering the system as a whole. For example, at §30, in *De musica*, Augustine wrote:

Si quis, uerbi gratia, in amplissimarum pulcherrimarumque aedium uno aliquo angulo tamquam statua conlocetur, pulchritudinem illius fabricae sentire non poterit, cuius et ipse pars erit, nec uniuersi exercitus ordinem miles inacie ualet intueri, et in quolibet poemate si quanto spatio syllabae sonant, tanto uiuerent atque sentirent, nullo modo illa numerositas et contexti opens pulchritudo eis placeret, quam totam perspicere atque adprobare non possent, cum de ipsis singulis praetereuntibus fabricata esset atque perfecta. Ita peccantem hominem ordinauit Deus turpem non turpiter.

If someone, for example, were placed as a statue in a corner of an enormous and extraordinarily beautiful building, he would not be able to perceive the beauty of that construction, of which he himself would be a part, nor is a soldier in the line able to see the order of the whole army, and, if the syllables in some poem were to live and perceive for as long a time as they sound, they would in no way be delighted by the rhythmicity and beauty of the composition of the work, the beauty of which they would not be able to

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<sup>213</sup> Teeuwen, *Harmony and the Music of the Spheres*, 335.

overlook and approve of in its totality, since it would be constructed and perfected by the individual, transient syllables themselves. In this way, God disposed of the sinful man as a disgraceful one, but not disgracefully.<sup>214</sup>

As a final example from *Periphyseon* III and to conclude this chapter, consider the following quotation, in which Eriugena speculates about the end of the world. Rather than following other philosophers, who held the material world to be eternal in its materiality, Eriugena envisaged a renewed heavens and earth whose perfection is achieved “by a new equalization of its parts”:

In hoc nanque sensus eorum uariatur, quibusdam affirmantibus statum mutabilium futurum, quibusdam uero naturalem motum elementorum semper non cessaturum; illi quidem sequentes quod scriptum est “*Erunt omnia quieta,*” et hoc de statu mutabilium intelligentes, illi uero “*Concentum caeli quis dormire faciet?*” de aeterno mutabilium motu dictum esse accipientes. Armonia siquidem caelestis sine motu aetheriae sphaerae omniumque siderum quomodo poterit concinere, cum musica semper in motu sit, quemadmodum geometria in statu? Terrenam quoque molem suam propriam quantitatem semper habituram indubitanter affirmant, sequentes quod scriptum est “*Generatio uenit, generatio uadit, terra uero in aeternum stat,*” eo excepto quod superficies eius undique planabitur, ut pulchrior quam nunc est efficiatur, ac ueluti noua quadam partium aequalitate renouata, non ut intereat quod nunc est, sed ut mutata in melius quantitas eius et aequalitas permaneat. Quod etiam de caelo uolunt intelligi, hoc est, quod eius

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<sup>214</sup> Jacobsson, trans., *Aurelius Augustinus [De musica VI]*, 67–70.

pulchritudo, in qua nunc sensibus corporeis arridet, in fine mundi cumulabitur absque ullo globatae suae figurae stellataeque picturae interitu, quoniam scriptum est, ut aiunt: “Erit caelum nouum et terra noua.”

On the other hand, in this their sense differs, for certain ones assert a future situation of changeable things, yet others argue that the natural motion of the elements will never cease. The former follow what was written, “All will be quiet,” and understand this in reference to the stability of changeable things. However, the latter take “Who will make the harmony of heaven to sleep?” to have been said concerning to the eternal motion of changeable things. Accordingly, how will celestial harmony be able to sound without the motion of the ethereal sphere and of all the constellations, when music is always in motion just as geometry is at rest? Moreover, they promptly declare that the earthly mass will always possess its proper quantity, following the text, “A generation comes, a generation goes, but earth remains for ever” [Ecclesiastes 1:4], with the exception that its outward appearance is everywhere in flux, so that it may become more beautiful than it now is. And it is renewed as though by a new equalization of its parts, not so that what now exists shall perish, but so that its quality and equality remains, changed into something better. And this they think should be applied to the heaven also, that is, that its beauty, which is now apparent to the bodily senses, shall at the end of the world be concentrated, without any loss of its global shape or ornament of stars, since it is written, according to them, “There shall be a new heaven and a new earth” [Revelation 21:1].<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Periphyseon*, CCCM, vol. 163, 44. The first two Biblical quotations in this passage, not cross-referenced, are most likely 2 Chronicles 14:7 and Job 38:37

In conclusion, it is evident that Eriugena's concepts of equality and proportionate ordering in the case of the soul, cosmos, and the "natural orders" cohere with the study of musical rhythm in texts studied by him in the ninth century. But more needs to be said about the nature of proportionate ordering; specifically, what is the nature of this lovely proportionality observed throughout the chain of being? How is it that the two extremes of a system (spatially or metaphysically) can be considered unified in a way that constitutes harmony? And what is the sort of mediation Eriugena (following Augustine) intended in *Periphyseon* III, in §630, when he wrote:

As between the numerical proportions [*proportionibus numerorum*], there are the proportionalities [*proportionalitates*], that is to say, similar principles of proportion; in the same way, the Wisdom, that is, the Creator of all things, has constituted marvelous and ineffable harmonies between the participations of the natural orders, by which all things come together into one concord or amity or peace or love or whatever other name can signify the unification of all things.

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respectively. In the 2 Chronicles passage, Eriugena is probably referencing a theological point derived from the verse in question, hence the change of *sunt* to *erunt* from the Vulgate, in his quotation.

## CHAPTER 5

### ERIUGENA'S *EXPOSITIONES IN HIERARCHIAM CAELESTEM*

Using *Periphyseon* and Eriugena's commentary on Martianus Capella's *De Nuptiis*, we have thus far observed the interreferentiality of music, soul, and cosmos inherent in Eriugena's expansive definition of *musica*: "Music is the discipline discerning by the light of reason the harmony of all things in natural proportions [*in naturalibus proportionibus*] which are either in motion or at rest."<sup>216</sup> As a concluding exploration of Eriugena's concept of the "harmony of all things" and the wide applicability of the *ars musica*, this chapter will address Eriugena's final intellectual contribution, his commentary on Pseudo-Dionysius's *Celestial Hierarchy* (accomplished between 865–70 CE) in terms of the "natural proportions" mentioned in Eriugena's definition of music.

As explained in Chapter 4, for Augustine and Eriugena, everything in the chain of being is related and proportionately organized, so that the resulting concord encompasses every part. In order to understand this total harmony, though, we must specify the mediating nature of proportions found throughout the entire system from literature Eriugena knew and studied. Using Calcidius's commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* and Boethius's *De institutione musica*, I will describe proportional mediation in terms of the physical elements and as a musical theoretical principle.

#### **Pseudo-Dionysius and *The Celestial Hierarchy***

It was universally accepted in Eriugena's day that the author of *The Celestial Hierarchy* (*CH*) was Dionysius the Areopagite, a first-century convert by St. Paul (cf., Acts 17:34) who was

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<sup>216</sup> Periphyseon, CCCM 161, 48 (PL122:475B): "Musica est omnium quae sunt siue in motu siue in statu in naturalibus proportionibus armoniam rationis lumine dinoscens disciplina."

eventually made Bishop of Athens and that the work was truly addressed to St. Timothy, Bishop of Ephesus. For Eriugena, therefore, the treatise was connected to the Apostolic age and possessed great authority. For example, Dionysius most likely relayed insights furnished from Paul himself.<sup>217</sup>

The name *Pseudo*-Dionysius now designates the writer of *CH*, since it is now accepted that he actually lived several centuries after Paul and was possibly Syrian.<sup>218</sup> The importance of this anonymous Pseudo-Dionysius arises from the acceptance of his writings, for most of the Middle Ages, as from the actual Dionysius and from his successful synthesis of Neoplatonic philosophy and Christianity. For example, as for Proclus, every effect remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and converts to it (cf., *Elementatio theologica*, Prop. 35), so too for Pseudo-

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<sup>217</sup> The issue over whether the Dionysius of Acts 17 and eventual Bishop of Athens is the same person as St. Denis, missionary to the Gauls and martyred Bishop of Paris, is tricky. A generation before Eriugena, at the instigation of Louis the Pious, the scholar Hilduin translated the manuscript containing the *Celestial Hierarchies* (a translation Eriugena knew and used) and wrote a biography of Dionysius conflating the two characters; i.e., Dionysius was made Bishop of Athens and was later sent by the Pope as a missionary to the Gauls. As Paul Rorem demonstrates, Eriugena was more cautious and never contradicts Hilduin's account, but leaves the question open that St. Denis might have been a separate person, cf., *Eriugena's Commentary on the Dionysian Celestial Hierarchy* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2005), 8ff. A further complication for Eriugena was that both Charles II (Eriugena's patron) and Charles's father, Louis the Pious, were particularly devoted to St. Denis and intimately connected to the Abbey of St. Denis.

<sup>218</sup> Kevin Corrigan and L. Michael Harrington, "Pseudo-Dionysius," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2011 Edition), ed. Edward Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu>> (accessed December 20, 2013). Following convention, I will refer to *Pseudo*-Dionysius in the following.

Dionysius, everything is connected vertically in a sequence of abiding, procession, and return.<sup>219</sup> Similarly, for Neoplatonists, there is a graded, hierarchical ordering of all things from the most universal to the most particular with each participant containing properties of other participants either more generally or particularly; Pseudo-Dionysius expresses this idea in terms of participation between members within the angelic hierarchy.

The Greek codex containing Pseudo-Dionysius's works, used by Eriugena and Hilduin before him, was the gift of Byzantine Emperor Michael II to Louis the Pious (currently Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Greek 437). It was immediately placed in the Abbey of Saint Denis, presumably due to the supposed attribution of the text to St. Denis.<sup>220</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Greek 437 was the only source available to Eriugena for translation, and, with only one text to consult, he faced several interpretive challenges, mostly due to scribal errors in the manuscript.<sup>221</sup> As for the manuscript tradition of Eriugena's *Expositiones in*

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<sup>219</sup> Corrigan and Harrington, "Pseudo-Dionysius," (accessed December 20, 2013).

<sup>220</sup> Paul Rorem, *Eriugena's Commentary on the Dionysian Celestial Hierarchy* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2005), 21.

<sup>221</sup> Cf., *Eriugena's Commentary on the Dionysian Celestial Hierarchy* in which Rorem outlines Eriugena's translation philosophy and explains his brilliant workarounds for what we now know to be copyist errors, 21 ff. Interestingly, Rorem stresses that in his commentary "[Eriugena] did not openly challenge the integrity of the text. Although on one rare occasion he acknowledged that the copyist might have erred, he nevertheless struggled valiantly to make sense of every reading as it stood" (21). It is evident that Eriugena had trouble translating Pseudo-Dionysius. In a letter to Charles II he wrote about the task, "Opus ualde, ut opinamur, anfractuosum, longeque a modernis sensibus remotum, multis inuium, paucis apertum, non solum propter antiquitatem, uerem etiam caelestium altitudinem mysteriorum." [The work is great, as might be supposed, tortuous, far removed from modern senses, many places are

*Hierarchiam Caelestem*, no complete copy was available until the discovery of Douai, Bibliothèque municipale, 202 (s.XII), in 1950, by H. Dondaine.<sup>222</sup> Douai, Bibliothèque municipale, 202 contains about a quarter of Eriugena's entire work unavailable elsewhere, i.e., most of Chapters 3–7.<sup>223</sup>

The process Eriugena invariably followed for his commentary on *CH* was to 1) present a line or two from his very literal translation of Pseudo-Dionysius's text, rendered earlier in his career, before writing *Periphyseon*,<sup>224</sup> 2) paraphrase that translation, often with equivalent terminology, and 3) exposit the text, interpreting its content.

The fifteen chapters of *CH* can be outlined as follows: Chapter 1 introduces the treatise and the nature of divine illumination. Chapter 2 discusses the use of names to describe God and angelic beings. Chapter 3 defines the nature of hierarchy, and Chapter 4 describes the celestial hierarchy. Chapter 5 explains what the term angel signifies. Chapter 6 labels the nine ranks of angels, which are explained more fully in Chapters 7-9. The hierarchy of angels are 1) Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones, 2) Lordships, Powers, and Authorities, and 3) Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. Chapter 10 repeats a summary of the angelic hierarchies and their characteristics. Chapter 11 explains how the common term “celestial powers” applies to all the hierarchies.

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inaccessible, few ways open, not only because of the antiquity of the work, but also because of the height of the celestial mysteries (MacInnis, trans., quoted in *CCCM* 31, pg. ix)].

<sup>222</sup> Rorem, *Eriugena's Commentary*, x.

<sup>223</sup> J. Barbet, ed., *Johannis Scoti Erigenae Expositiones in Ierarchiam Coelestem*, in *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975), vol. 31, xii.

<sup>224</sup> Concerning the literal nature of Eriugena's translation, Rorem writes, “Such fidelity even to the order of words in the source language is the dominant characteristic of Eriugena's translation, for better and for worse” (*Eriugena's Commentary*, 52). All caps are used for Eriugena's earlier literal translation in the Barbet edition of Eriugena's commentary.



Chapter 12 extends the angelic hierarchies to include humans. Chapter 13 describes how it is that the prophet Isaiah was purified by a seraph, one of the higher ranks. Chapter 14 explores the numbers of angels presented in the Bible, and Chapter 15 presents the various physical appearances angels are said to take.<sup>225</sup>

As stated above, proportional mediation was a fundamental concept for Pseudo-Dionysius as he described the Celestial Hierarchy of angels spanning the spiritual distance between God and man, and this significance was not lost on Eriugena as he commented on *CH*. In order to understand the full metaphysical implications of proportional mediation, the following section outlines instances of its use in Calcidius's commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*, in which he describes the construction of the cosmic body and soul.

### **Proportional Mediation in Calcidius's Commentary on Plato's *Timaeus***

The concept of proportional mediation is fundamental to the ancient understanding of the harmony of the spheres, and it is seen clearly in how Calcidius explains Plato's description of the physical elements in the cosmos. To begin with, the divine architect established two opposite elements of fire and earth along with the principles for how they are to interact while providing an enduring coherence to the entire structure. Between fire and earth, the architect inserted two new elements, air and water, which share characteristics with each other and the extreme elements. The proportional nature of this mediation is described in the following quotation from §§21-22 of Calcidius's commentary:

Quare si inter ignem et terram nulla est in specie et uelut in uultu similitudo, quaerenda erit in naturis ac qualitatibus ipsorum elementorum iuxta quas faciunt aliquid aut

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<sup>225</sup> Corrigan and Harrington, "Pseudo-Dionysius," (accessed December 20, 2013).

patiuntur et in his proprietatibus ex quibus utriusque elementi uis et germanitas apprimè designatur. Sunt igitur tam ignis quam terrae multae quidem et aliae proprietates, sed quae uel maxime uim earum proprietatemque declarent, nimirum hae: ignis quidem acumen, quod est acutus et penetrans, deinde quod est tener et delicata quadam subtilitate, tum quod est mobilis et semper in motu, terrae uero obtusitas, quod est retusa, quod corpulenta, quod semper immobilis. Hae uero naturae licet sint contrariae, habent tamen aliquam ex ipsa contrarietate paritatem—tam enim similia similibus quam dissimilia dissimilibus comparantur—et haec est analogia, id est ratio continui competentis: quod enim est acumen aduersum obtusitatem, hoc subtilitas iuxta corpulentiam, et quod subtilitas iuxta corpulentiam, hoc mobilitas aduersum immobilitatem ... Si enim uicinum igni elementum quod sit et ex quibus conflatum uoluerimus inquirere, sumemus ignis quidem de proximo duas uirtutes, subtilitatem et mobilitatem, unam uero terrae, id est obtusitatem, et inuenietur genitura secundi elementi quod est subter ignem, id est aeris; est enim aer obtusus subtilis mobilis. Rursumque si eius elementi quod est uicinum terrae, id est aquae, genituram consideremus, sumemus duas quidem terrae uirtutes, id est obtusitatem et corpulentiam, unam uero ignis, id est motum ... Conseruatur autem hoc pacto analogia quoque geometrica iuxta rationem continui competentis; ut enim ignis aduersum aera, sic aer aduersum aquam et demum aqua iuxta terram.

Therefore, if there is no similarity between fire and earth in appearance and, so to speak, countenance, it should be sought in those natures and qualities of those elements according to which they manifest some activity or passivity and in those characteristics through which the power and affinity of the elements are especially designated. There are

many other properties of fire and earth, but those that greatly declare their power and characteristics are especially, of fire, acuity—since it is sharp and penetrating, rarefied in a certain delicate subtlety and mobile, always in motion, but of earth, obtuseness—since it is blunt, heavy, and eternally immobile. Although these natures are indeed contraries, they possess a certain equality through that very contrariety—for similars are compared to similars as much as dissimilars to dissimilars—and this is analogy [*analogia*], i.e., the principle of continuous progression. As acuity stands in respect to bluntness, so does fineness stand in relation to heaviness, and, as fineness stands in relation to heaviness, so does mobility in respect of immobility ... If we wish to examine what is the adjacent element to fire and of what properties it consists, we shall take two powers of fire in the next position, fineness and mobility, and one from earth, bluntness. The generation of air, the second element below fire, will be discovered, since air is blunt, fine, and mobile. Again, if we examine the generation of water, that element which is adjacent to earth, we shall take two powers of earth, bluntness and heaviness, and one of fire, motion . . . A geometrical analogy [*analogia quoque geometrica*], also according to the principle of continuous progression, is preserved by this arrangement: as fire is in relation to air, so is air to water, and, finally, water to earth.<sup>226</sup>

The nature of the proportional progression that Calcidius calls *analogia* is continuous and geometrical. It is continuous in that there is a progression involving multiple elements, and it is geometrical in that while the two extremes are exact opposites, the sequence of participants in

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<sup>226</sup> MacInnis, trans., J. Waszink, ed., *Timaeus: A Calcidio Translatus Commentarioque Instructus* (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 71-72.

between possess the same ratio; i.e., the relation of the first and second is the same as the second to the third, and so on.<sup>227</sup> This continuous progression of characteristics within the elements is diagrammed in Table 1.

Table 1: Proportional Mediation of the Physical Elements

	Sharp	Fine	Mobile	Blunt	Heavy	Immobile
Fire	X	X	X			
Air		X	X	X		
Water			X	X	X	
Earth				X	X	X

Along with this description of proportional mediation between the elements of the physical world, Calcidius also explains a comparable structure for the accompanying World Soul. At §34B, in *Timaeus*, Plato describes how the soul was fashioned before the physical world as a perfect, intermediate blending of two extreme states of being, same and other. The architect then divided a portion of the psychic substance in two ways, each producing a different geometrical mean, 1:2::2:4::4:8 and 1:3::3:9::9:27. Further divisions result in proportions that Plato's readers would have immediately recognized as the intervals of the Pythagorean scale. Plato wrote,

Here's how he began to make the division. First, he took away one portion from all of what he had, and, after this portion, he proceeded to take away its double, and, in turn, a third portion, half as much again as the second and three times the first, and a fourth,

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<sup>227</sup> Stephen Gersh, *Concord in Discourse: Harmonics and Semiotics in Late Classical and Early Medieval Platonism* (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996), 130.

double the second, and a fifth, three times the third, and a sixth portion, eight times the first, and a seventh, twenty-seven times the first. After this, he proceeded to fill up the double and triple intervals by cutting off still more portions from the original mixture; and he put them in the intermediate positions, between the portions he already had, so as to have two means within each interval—a mean that exceeds one extreme and is exceeded by the other by the same fractional part, and another mean that exceeds one extreme by a number equal to the amount by which it is exceeded by the other extreme. And, since there arose from these bonds new intervals within those he already had (intervals of 3:2, 4:3, and 9:8), he went about filling up all the 4:3 intervals with intervals of 9:8, leaving in each of them a fractional part. And this leftover interval that corresponded to the part had its terms in the numerical ratio of 256 to 243. That, in fact, is how the mixture from which he'd been making these cuts at last had all been spent.<sup>228</sup>

Aside from Plato's fascinating mention of tones (9:8) and even semitones (256:243), it is important to note in this passage a need to mediate between two extremes and the resulting sequences of ratios which display principles of analogy similar to the physical elements; the sequences are continuous, containing multiple elements, and geometrical, the larger, structural ratios remain the same. In explaining Plato's text, Calcidius wrote that the three-dimensional nature of the physical world is, in fact, a byproduct of the World Soul, for the sets of ratios

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<sup>228</sup> *Plato's Timaeus*, trans. Peter Kalkavage (Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2001), 64-65.

discerned in the World Soul are also used for generating three-dimensional objects, such as a cube.<sup>229</sup>

Additionally, to demonstrate the harmonic nature of both the cosmic soul and body, Calcidius applies the musical ratios described by Plato in regard to the soul to the physical elements and points out again the paralleled mediation between two extremes:

Horum numerorum interualla numeris aliis contexti uolebat, ut esset in animae textu corporis similitudo. Itaque limitibus constitutis, uno sex, altero duodecim qui est duplex, duabus medietatibus, octo et nouem, sex et duodecim limitum interuallum continuauit epitrita, item sescuplari potentia, perindeque ut inter ignis limitem terraeque alterum limitem insertis aeris et aquae materiis mundi corpus continuatum est ita numerorum potentiis insertis, ut tamquam elementis materiisque membra animae intellegibilia conecterentur essetque aliqua inter animam corpusque similitudo.

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<sup>229</sup> For example, as Calcidius explains in the quotation below, two single points make a line, two lines makes a surface, four surfaces make a cube: “Apex ergo numerorum singularitas sine ullis partibus, ut geometrica nota; cuius duplum linea, sine latitudine longitudo; lineae duplum superficies, quae est prolixitas cum latitudine; cuius duplum cubus, corpus per longum latum profundumque diuisum, bis duo bis, quod est octo.” (Therefore, the summit of numbers is a singularity without any parts, as with a geometrical point, two of which [points] make a line without latitude or longitude. Two lines make a surface, which is an extension with latitude. Two [such surfaces] make a cube, a body distinguished by length, breadth, and depth: two times two times two, which is eight. (MacInnis, trans., *Timaeus: A Calcidio*, 83, §33.)

[The artificer] wished these numerical intervals to be interwoven with other numbers, so that there might be a likeness of body in the fabric of soul. He established as the limits, six and twelve (a duple relationship) with two intermediaries [*duabus medietatibus*], eight and nine. He joined the interval between the extremes of six and twelve with the force of the ratios 4:3 [*epitrita*] and 3:2 [*sescuplari*], just as the world's body has been connected through insertion of the elements air and water between the limits of fire and earth. Thus, by the insertion of numerical potencies, the intelligible parts of soul could be joined, as if by elements and substances, and there be a likeness between soul and body.<sup>230</sup>

Applying the numbers as Calcidius directs in this instance (fire-6, air-8, water-9, earth-12) produces the following relationships between the elements which are, of course, Pythagorean (12:9:8:6),<sup>231</sup> but not geometrical as he had earlier explained: fire to air = 3:4, air to water = 8:9, water to earth = 3:4.<sup>232</sup> The discrepancy is not bothersome; rather, we readily see the flexibility with which musical ratios are used to make sense of the material and immaterial world and the apparent necessity felt by Plato and his commentator that these proportions mediate predictably between extremes.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Timaeus: A Calcidio*, 144-45, §92.

<sup>231</sup> Cf., Boethius, *De institutione musica*, trans. Calvin Bower (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 1989), 19. At Book I:10 Boethius explains how Pythagoras discovered the consonances (diapason, diapente, and diatessaron).

<sup>232</sup> Gersh, *Concord*, 137.

<sup>233</sup> Gersh, *Concord*, 137.

To understand how proportional mediation was described in a specifically musical context and to better define our terms, the following section examines the words *proportio*, *proportionalitas*, and *medius* using Boethius's *De institutione musica*.

### ***Proportionalitas in Boethius's De institutione musica***

It is clear that Boethius knew the portion of *Timaeus* quoted above which describes Plato's harmonic accounting for the creation of the World Soul; near the beginning of *De institutione musica* (*DIM*) he wrote, "What Plato rightfully said can likewise be understood: the soul of the universe was joined together according to musical concords."<sup>234</sup> The musical concords specified by Plato and referenced here by Boethius are the ratios arising from the Pythagorean series 12:9:8:6. For Boethius, understanding proportion or ratio was vital to any discussion of music, so he addressed the topic thoroughly in *DIM* in terms of means. At Book II:12, quoted below, he explained combinations of ratios and the classical Pythagorean means arising between them: the arithmetic, geometric, and harmonic:<sup>235</sup>

Since we have discussed the matters concerning ratios [*proportionibus*] that had to be considered, we should now discuss means [*medietatibus*]. A ratio [*proportio*] is a certain comparison of two terms measured against themselves. By terms, I mean numerical wholes. A proportion [*proportionalitas*] is a collection of equal ratios [*proportionum*]. A proportion [*proportionalitas*] consists of at least three terms, for when a first term related to a second holds the same ratio [*proportionem*] as the second to the third, then this is

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<sup>234</sup> Boethius, trans. Calvin Bower, *De institutione musica*, 2.

<sup>235</sup> Bower explains how the three Pythagorean means were important to ancient music theory, e.g., the arithmetic mean is applied to ratios of the diatonic division to calculate chromatic and enharmonic genera (Boethius, *De institutione musica*, xxxii-iv).



called a “proportion” [*proportionalitas*], and the “mean” [*medius*] among these three terms is that which is second. There is, then, a threefold classification of middle terms joining these ratios together. Either the difference between the lesser term and the mean term is equal to that of the mean and the largest, but the ratio is not equal in the numbers 1:2:3, for example, unity alone is the difference between 1 and 2 as well as 2 and 3, but the ratio is not equal (2:1 forms a duple whereas 3:2 forms a sesquialter)—or an equal ratio is established between both pairs, but not an equal difference—in the numbers 1:2:4, for example, 2:1 is duple, as is 4:2, but the difference between 4 and 2 is 2, whereas, that between 2 and unity is 1. There is a third class of mean which is characterized by neither the same ratios nor the same differences, but is derived in such a way that the largest term is related to the smallest in the same way that the difference between the larger terms is related to the difference between the lesser terms—in the numbers 3:4:6 ... [A]mong these three means, only the geometric is strictly and properly called a “proportion” [*proportionalitas*], since it is the only one totally constructed according to equal ratios [*proportionibus*]. Nevertheless, we use the same word indiscriminately, calling the others “proportions” [*proportionalitates*] as well.<sup>236</sup>

In this excerpt, Boethius was clear that a ratio [*proportio*, Gr. λόγος] involves two terms and that a proportion [*proportionalitas*, Gr. ἀναλογία] involves multiple terms producing a mean [*medius*]. Furthermore, we see that for Boethius the *medius* is properly called a “proportion” only

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<sup>236</sup> Bower, trans., Boethius, *De institutione musica*, Book II:12, 65-66. Latin insertions are taken from the Friedlein edition of *DIM*.

in the case of a geometric collection of equal ratios (e.g., 1:2:4), but that does not limit applying the term for the so-called harmonic (e.g., 3:4:6) and arithmetic (e.g., 1:2:3) means.<sup>237</sup>

It must be remembered that the concept Boethius here calls *proportionalitas* can also be rendered in Latin as *conrationalitas* (as in Augustine's *De musica* VI)<sup>238</sup> and *analogia* (as in Calcidius, quoted above). Having thus observed the terms used to describe mediation between multiple ratios in texts known and studied by Eriugena (e.g., Calcidius/Plato and Boethius) and understanding their flexibility and ambiguity of use, we should consider Eriugena's own use of proportional mediation beginning with *Periphyseon* III, in which he describes the division of waters above and below the firmament in Genesis 1 as between the primordial causes, the transcendent state of the elements, and the immanent state of elemental qualities.

### ***Proportionalitas* as Creative Principle**

In Chapter 4, I mentioned Eriugena's theory of the elements in *Periphyseon* I, which is clearly similar to Calcidius's, i.e., the whirling stars and Earth are set as extremes proportionally mediated by air and water. My intention, in Chapter 4, was to demonstrate the significance of ordered motion and rest in the elements, but we should note Eriugena's terminology; whereas, Calcidius used the term *analogia*, in this instance, Eriugena prefers *proportionalitas*:

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<sup>237</sup> Cf. Boethius, *De institutione musica*, 65n.34. Bower points out that Boethius's descriptions in this section of *DIM* are actually clearer than in his treatise on Arithmetic.

<sup>238</sup> Augustine, *De musica* VI, §57, 112. Confirming that he meant *analogia*, in the cited portion of *De musica*, Augustine describes the cube as an example of *conrationalitas*—a geometric object that perfectly and simply expresses a geometrical analogy (as Calcidius likewise explained in the portion of his commentary considered above).

nam grauitas moueri nescit – et est in medio mundi constituta extremumque ac medium obtinet terminum; aetheria uero spatia propterea ineffabili uelocitate semper circa media uoluuntur quoniam in natura leuitatis constituta sunt, quae stare ignorat et extremum mundi uisibilis obtinent finem. Duo uero in medio elementa constituta, aqua uidelicet et aer, proportionali moderamine inter grauitatem et leuitatem assidue mouentur.

For heaviness has no motion and is established in the center of the world holding the extreme and central boundary. The ethereal regions always revolve around the center with unspeakable velocity, since they are established with the nature of lightness. They know no rest and hold the extreme boundary of the visible world. But the two elements established in the middle [*medio*], water and air, move constantly with a proportional moderation [*proportionali moderamine*] between heaviness and lightness.<sup>239</sup>

In *Periphyseon* III, Eriugena presents another accounting of the elements, this time in terms of the qualities hot, cold, dry, and wet. In this instance, he notes that the most significant qualities of the elements are each opposite and contrary:<sup>240</sup>

Vbi notandum quod non ex coitu substantialium elementorum, dum sint incorruptibilia et insolubilia, sed ex eorum qualitatibus sibi inuicem proportionaliter copulatis corpora sensibilia conficiuntur. Qualitates autem quattuor elementorum notissimae sunt quattuor: Caliditas, umiditas, frigiditas, siccitas, ex quibus omnia corpora materialia adiectis formis componi physica perhibet theoria. Quarum quidem actiuas esse duas philosophi dicunt

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<sup>239</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Periphyseon* I, CCCM 161, 50-51 (PL122:477B-C).

<sup>240</sup> Gersh, *Concord*, 145.

caliditatem et frigiditatem; passiuasque duas, umiditatem et ariditatem. Dum enim caliditas umiditati et frigiditas ariditati naturali quodam coitu miscentur, omnia quae in terra et mari nascuntur procreationem accipiunt.

And here it should be noted that sensible bodies are produced not from the joining of substantial elements that are incorruptible and indissoluble, but from their qualities joined together proportionally [*proportionaliter*]. There are four best-known qualities for each of the four elements: hotness, wetness, coldness, and dryness, from which physical theory asserts that all solid bodies are composed when forms are added. Natural philosophers say that two of these are active, hotness and coldness, and two passive, wetness and dryness. For, when by a certain natural joining, hotness is blended with wetness and coldness with dryness, all things which are born in land and sea achieve their procreation.<sup>241</sup>

In both descriptions of the elements quoted above, we observe extremes that are mediated conceptually in an ordered proportionate way in the physical world. In another portion of *Periphyseon* III, Eriugena reads this principle of elemental mediation as a Neoplatonic emanation, i.e., in the Creation account of Genesis 1 in which the firmament is said to divide waters above and below. Specifically, Eriugena describes this division of water, firmament, and water as the primordial causes, the transcendent state of the elements, and the immanent state of elemental qualities. In the following set of three quotations from *Periphyseon* III, §695A-696B, one may observe 1) the division of all the created world into a three-term ratio of pure spirit,

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<sup>241</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Periphyseon* III, CCCM 163, 133 (PL122:712B).

pure matter, and a mediant composed of both proportionally, 2) proportional mediation in the interactions between the primordial causes and the physical world, and 3) Eriugena's acknowledgement that a possible interpretation of the primordial causes, or upper waters in this text, could be as the Celestial Powers [*caelestibus uirtutibus*]:

1) Totius itaque conditae naturae trinam diuisionem esse arbitror. Omne enim quod creatum est aut omnino corpus est, aut omnino spiritus, aut aliquod medium, quod nec omnino corpus est nec omnino spiritus, sed quadam medietatis et extremitatum ratione ex spirituali omnino natura, ueluti ex una extremitate et superiori, et ex alter (hoc est ex omnino corporea) proportionaliter in se recipit; unde proprie et connaturaliter extremitatibus suis subsistit. Proinde, si quis intentus inspexerit, in hac ternaria proportionalitate hunc mundum constitutum intelliget.

Therefore, I think that created nature is divided into three parts. For everything that is created is either entirely body or entirely spirit or something intermediate [*medium*] which is neither completely body nor completely spirit, but which, by a certain plan, between the middle and the extremes, proportionally [*proportionaliter*] receives into itself from the nature that is completely spiritual as from an higher extreme, and from the other, that is from the nature that is completely corporeal. Whence, properly, it stands naturally in relation to the extremes. Therefore, if anyone looks carefully he will understand that the universe is constituted upon this triple proportionality [*ternaria proportionalitate*].

2) At si quis simplicium elementorum naturam intueatur, luce clarius quamdam proportionabilem medietatem inueniet, qua nec omnino corpus sunt—quamuis eorum corruptione naturalia corpora subsistant et coitu, nec omnino corporeae naturae expertia, dum ab eis omnia corpora profluant et in ea iterum resoluantur. Et iterum alteri superiori quidem extremitate comparata nec omnino spiritus sunt, quoniam non omnino corporea extremitate absoluta, nec omnino non spiritus, cum ex rationibus omnino spiritualibus subsistentiae suae occasiones suscipiant. Non irrationabiliter itaque diximus hunc mundum extremitates quasdam a se inuicem penitus discretas et medietates, in quibus uniuersitatis concors armonia coniungitur possidere.

Anyone considering the nature of simple elements will find, clearer than light, a certain proportionate mediation [*proportionabilem medietatem*], that they are neither altogether body—although it is by their dissolving and joining that natural bodies exist—nor altogether without corporeal nature, since from them all bodies flow forth and are likewise resolved into them. Compared to the upper extreme, they are not altogether spirit, since they are not altogether detached from the corporeal extreme, and neither are they altogether not spirit, since they receive the occasions of their existence from reasons which are altogether spiritual. Not without reasons, then, did we say that this world possesses certain extremes, which are totally distinct from each other, and intermediaries, in which the concordant harmony of this universe is united.

3) Spirituales uero omnium uisibilium rationes superiorum aquarum nomine appellari ratio edocet. Ex ipsis enim omnia elementa, siue simplicia siue composita, ueluti ex

quibusdam magnis fontibus defluunt, indeque intelligibili quadam uirtute rigata administrantur. Nec hoc silet scriptura clamans: “Et aquae, quae super caelos sunt, laudant nomen domini.” Quamuis enim hoc de caelestibus uirtutibus quis intelligat, praedicto sensui non repugnat dum sit diuinorum eloquiorum multiplex interpretatio. Proinde harum aquarum in medio dixit deus fieri firmamentum, hoc est simplicium elementorum naturam quae quantum uisibilia corpora superat, tantum ab inuisibilibus eorum rationibus superatur; quantumque a superioribus suscipit, tantum inferioribus distribuit, quantum uero ab inferioribus recipit, tantum superioribus restituit, referens eis omne quod ab eis defluxit.

Reason teaches that it is the spiritual reasons of all visible things that are called by the name of the upper waters. From these, all the elements flow forth, whether simple or composite, as from certain great springs, and, thence, moistened by a certain intelligible virtue, they are conducted. Scripture is not silent on this point and declares, “The waters above the heavens praise the Name of the Lord” [Psalm 148:4]. Although one may understand this to refer to the Heavenly Powers [*caelestibus uirtutibus*], it does not necessarily oppose the interpretation given above, for there are many ways of interpreting the Divine Oracles. God said that the firmament was made in the midst of these waters, that is, the nature of simple elements that so much transcends visible bodies as it is transcended by their invisible reasons. And, as much as it receives from the things above, so much it distributes to those below. And, as much as it receives from the lower, so much it restores to the higher, returning to them all that had flowed from them.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Periphyseon* III, CCCM 163, 109-10 (PL122:695A-696A).

The possibility of reading the waters above the firmament as the primordial causes or as Celestial Powers, mentioned in the third example, speaks to the metaphysical question of how angelic life is differentiated from human life, angelic souls from human souls in the procession of all things from God. Furthermore, what is the nature of those interactions between rational beings spanning the spiritual distances between God and man? The quotation from Augustine's *De musica* VI, considered at the end of Chapter 4, hinted at a proportionate ordering in the Celestial Hierarchy, and, now, the implications to Augustine's (and Eriugena's) idea can be clearly understood.

### **Proportional Mediation within the Angelic Hierarchy**

In the following excerpt from *CH* Book IX, Eriugena explains that in the last hierarchy of Principalities, Archangels, and Angels we observe characteristics possessed by all hierarchies, two extremes and some sort of mediator. Furthermore, we read that the mediator has the function of passing on communication from the higher rank to the lower:

Hoc est quod ait: quamquam Principatum et Archangelorum et Angelorum una ierarchia sit et dispositio, uerumtamen non parua discernuntur differentia. Archangelorum siquidem ordo medietatis proportionem inter duos extremos, hoc est inter ordinem Principatum et ordinem angelicum optinet, quoniam nulla ierarchia est, siue humana siue angelica, que non habeat et primas et medias et ultimas uirtutes. Ordo itaque Archangelorum medius est inter Principatum quasi superiorem et Angelorum ueluti inferiorem. Et nihil aliud est ipsa medietatis proportio, nisi ierarchica, id est pontificalis communicatio.



This is what he [i.e., Pseudo-Dionysius] says: though the Principalities, Archangels, and Angels are placed in a hierarchy, nevertheless, no small difference is observed between them. Indeed, the order of archangels has the proportion of mediation [*medietatis proportionem*] between two extremes, that is, between the order of principalities and the angelic order, since there is no hierarchy whether human or angelic which does not have first, middle [*medias*], and last powers. So the order of archangels is in the middle between that of principalities which is as though inferior, while that portion of mediation [*medietatis proportio*] itself is none other than hierarchical or priestly communication.<sup>243</sup>

The communication referred to here, passed between the ranks of angels, is, in fact, illuminations or revelations from God to man. Interestingly, in the section following this passage, Eriugena translates Pseudo-Dionysius as claiming that these divine illuminations are shared between angelic orders and then to mankind in ways that are analogical: “These illuminations are disclosed to us through the Angels, according to the sacred analogy of each” (*easdem illuminationes nobis per Angelos manifestat, secundum sanctam analogiam uniuscuiusque*).<sup>244</sup>

Later, at the end of *CH XI*, Eriugena explains what this proportional relay of illumination entails: communication happens in ways that are particular and proportional to each participant in the hierarchy. We learn that communication is analogical because the nature of each celestial being is in fact analogical, i.e., properties of lower members are found in successively higher members as in the relationship between particulars to increasingly transcendent universals. Eriugena’s translation of Pseudo-Dionysius runs, “ILLVMINATIONIBVS PER PRIMAS

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<sup>243</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Expositiones*, CCCM 31, 136 (PL122:210).

<sup>244</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Expositiones*, CCCM 31, 137 (PL122:211).

PROPORTIONALITER EIS DISTRIBVTIS” [the illuminations are distributed proportionally to them through the first]. Commenting on this portion of *CH*, Eriugena wrote,

superordinati diuini animi abundanter sanctas proprietates minorum animorum habent, ultimi uero maiorum uniuersas superpositas proprietates non habent, dum apparentes illuminationes primis primo uniuersaliter in eos, ultimos uidelicet, particulariter per primos, et proportionaliter eis, ultimis, distribuuntur. Quod breuiter colligendum: copiose habent primi ordines et suas et minorum se diuinas primo in se apparentes illuminationes; non autem copiose, id est uniuersaliter, sicut ipsis primis, sed particulariter per primos ultimis, prout analogia eorum exigit, eedem illuminationes distribuuntur.

Divine souls of higher rank possess abundantly the holy properties of lesser souls, while those of the lowest rank do not possess the transcending universal properties of the higher. For one may see that the illuminations that appear first universally to the highest rank are then distributed through those first ranks to the last, in a manner particular and proportionate to them. Simply put, it should be inferred that the first orders have in abundance their own divine illuminations and those of the lower, which first appear in them. But those same illuminations are distributed through the first orders to the last not plentifully, i.e., universally, as they are to the first orders themselves, but particularly and as is appropriate to their analogy [*prout analogia eorum exigit*].<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Expositiones*, CCCM 31, 161 (PL122:230).

In one final portion from Eriugena's *Expositiones*, we read a summary of the foregoing information but learn, additionally, that the hierarchy of angels is set in motion by God and that the motion itself is proportional. One might imagine the varying motions of angels passing on illuminations from God as speeding up at each rank, perhaps doubling. Or one might picture the orbiting planets of the cosmos, all moving at proportional speeds above the still Earth. I find the second possibility compelling, but, in fact, I think Eriugena intends the motion mentioned here as metaphorical, as in the metaphorical flowing of the elements from the primordial causes mentioned above.<sup>246</sup>

MANIFESTATORES AVTEM OMNES, ET ANGELI EORVM QVI ANTE IPSOS, SVNT; IPSI QVIDEM HONORABILISSIMI DEI MOVENTIS, PROPORTIONALITER AVTEM CETERI EX DEO MOTORVM. Omnes uirtutes celestes manifestatores sunt et angeli eorum qui se precedunt, ita ut ordines prime ierarchie, qui sunt ceterorum excellentissimi, manifestatores angeli sunt Dei, qui omnes mouet, ceteri uero proportionaliter angeli sunt eorum qui ex Deo mouentur. Vt enim prima ierarchia ipsum Deum annuntiat medie, ita media annuntiat primam tertie, et tertia annuntiat mediam quarte que est nostra. Et, ut breuiter dicam, inferiores ordines gradatim ascendentes superiorum se angeli sunt, et omnes communiter Dei. TANTVM ENIM OMNIVM SVPERESSENTIALIS ARMONIA VNICUIQUE RATIONALIVM ET INTELLECTVALIVM SACRO ORNATV ET ORDINATA DVCTIONE PREVIDIT, QVANTVM IPSE IERARCHIARVM VNVSQVISQVE ORDO SACRE ET

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<sup>246</sup> Cf., *Periphyseon* III, CCCM 163, 109-110 (PL122:695A-696A).

DECENTER POSITVS EST. Tantum, inquit, superessentialis armonia, summa uidelicet omnium causa, preuidit unicuique rationali et intellectuali creature ornatu sacro et ordinata reductione distribuere, quantum ipse, unusquisque uidelicet, ordo ierarchiarum sancte et pulchre positus est, hoc est in quantum ordo ierarchiarum exigit, in tantum ei distribuitur ex superessentiali omnium adunatione.

MOREOVER, THEY ARE ALL THE REVEALERS AND MESSENGERS OF THOSE WHO ARE BEFORE THEM; INDEED, OF THOSE HAVING BEEN MOVED BY GOD, THEY THEMSELVES [i.e., the first hierarchy] ARE THE MOST HONORED OF GOD, IN COMPARISON TO THE OTHERS MOVING PROPORTIONALLY [*PROPORTIONALITER*]. All celestial powers are the revealers and messengers of those who precede them so that the ranks of the first hierarchy, who are the most excellent among them, are the revealers and messengers of God, who moves them all. In truth, the rest of them are angels who are moved by God proportionally so that the first hierarchy makes God Himself known to the middle. Thus, the middle makes the first known to the third, and the third makes the middle known to the fourth, which is ours. And, that I may speak briefly, the lower ranks climbing by degrees are the messengers for the superiors, and all commonly of God. INDEED, THE SUPERESSENTIAL HARMONY HAS SO FORESEEN TO THE SACRED EQUIPPING AND APPOINTED LEADING FOR EACH OF THE RATIONAL AND INTELLECTUAL BEINGS THAT EACH RANK OF THE HIERARCHIES IS ITSELF PLACED SACREDLY AND APPROPRIATELY. He [i.e., Pseudo-Dionysius] says, so much has the Superessential Harmony, the highest cause of all things clearly foreseen for each rational and intellectual creature to assign a

sacred ordering and appointed leading back so that one may see that each rank of the hierarchies is itself sacredly and beautifully positioned. That is, the rank of hierarchies is so furnished that it is assigned to them according to the superessential union of all things.<sup>247</sup>

In conclusion, it is important to note from these passages that the mediation of properties between hierarchies is a procession from universal to increasingly particular; it is not simply a matter of possessing or not possessing discrete characteristics, as in Calcidius's discussion of the elements ranging between fire and earth. And, certainly, Pseudo-Dionysius and Eriugena do not envision actual spatial distances between members of the celestial hierarchy. On the other hand, similarities between these passages of Eriugena explaining Pseudo-Dionysius and Calcidius expounding Plato, as well as the other texts considered above, are found in how each seeks to account for the distance between apparently irreconcilable extremes. In each instance, a mediator or mediators arise to bridge the gap in proportional ways, though Pseudo-Dionysius's account of the celestial hierarchy is exceptional in how the mediators are not simple elements but rational beings with active and passive potential.<sup>248</sup> Finally, Pseudo-Dionysius and Eriugena do not present numbers to describe the proportional relationships; their understanding is that the angelic beings exist and act in ways like an analogy, i.e., the hierarchy of angels interact in ways similar to Calcidius's continuous and geometrical analogies between the elements.

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<sup>247</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Expositiones*, CCCM 31, 154 (PL122:225).

<sup>248</sup> Gersh, *Concord*, 154.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION: “THE HARMONY OF ALL THINGS”

In conclusion, this dissertation has surveyed the major writings of John Scottus Eriugena and explained resonances of the *ars musica* in his *Annotationes in Marcianum*, *Periphyseon*, and *Expositiones in Hierarchiam Caelestem*. Specifically, we have observed the ways in which Eriugena’s reflections on music as a liberal art and all-embracing academic discipline intersect with his discussions of the cosmos and the soul, the corporeal and the spiritual.

We have traced the expansive significance of Eriugena’s definition of *musica* from *Periphyseon* I, which singles out the discipline of music as addressing both the physical and metaphysical worlds: “Music is the discipline discerning by the light of reason the harmony of all things in natural proportions which are either in motion or at rest.”<sup>249</sup> Particularly, the “natural proportions” in Eriugena’s definition constitute all things that can be studied, visible or invisible, and regardless of their motion or rest; i.e., all things are ordered and can be considered rationally. We have seen that the proportions Eriugena read everywhere in the universe are a part of the same universal, harmonic principle of proportional mediation between extremes and that they can be literally understood (in the case of music) and metaphorically implied (in the case of the Celestial Hierarchy). Furthermore, these proportions are understood as most basically continuous and geometrical, a universal application of *proportionalitas* or *analogia*.

For Eriugena, there truly was a harmony to all things. Indeed, the entire coherence of the universe can find no better metaphor than harmony, nor can any other of the liberal arts more perfectly express cosmic complexity and unity than *musica*. Eriugena is not alone in this view, of

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<sup>249</sup> *Periphyseon* I, CCCM 161, 48 (PL122:475B): “Musica est omnium quae sunt siue in motu siue in statu in naturalibus proportionibus armoniam rationis lumine dinoscens disciplina.”

course; the Neoplatonic tradition to which he contributed had long heard harmony in the spheres and beyond. Through the voice of its last major expounder, then, we observe where Neoplatonism eventually stood in its ancient desire to understand the coherence and interreferentiality of music, soul, and cosmos. Eriugena's distinction comes in his intense and prodigious efforts to systematize the intellectual traditions of the past with orthodox and truly catholic Christianity, drawing on both Eastern and Western traditions.

In addition to observing the state of Neoplatonism in the ninth-century, in Eriugena's writings, it is fascinating to note that a consistent element in Eriugena's explanations of the related ordering of music, soul, and cosmos is the need for a central mediator to make sense of an entire system. For example, in Eriugena's explanations of Capella's *De Nuptiis*, we learned that the image of the centrally placed Sun modulating the entire cosmic system relates to the central pitch (*media*) defined in the Immutable System of Tetrachords and that pitch (*media*) established when tuning a monochord. More abstractly, for Eriugena, the modulating Sun also serves as a metaphor for reason in the process of theosis. And, similarly, the middle rank (*media*) in the Celestial Hierarchy transmits the oracles of God between the first and the third.

Using documents read and known by Eriugena in the ninth century, we have observed how philosophical terms and concepts play out in concert with the study of music and that the interreferentiality of music, soul, and cosmos in Eriugena's writings highlights the interdisciplinary nature of music in Eriugena's day. That is, this dissertation has contributed to a more thorough understanding of ninth-century musical culture and demonstrated the great importance of *musica* in Carolingian learning, especially in philosophical discourse.

Understanding the general applicability for concepts defined as musical in Carolingian literature provides insight into motivations for more specialized explorations of music in the

ninth century and its value in Carolingian culture generally, e.g., the sudden appearance of the first medieval music treatises, the first notations of chant, and the first penned theoretical rationalizations for polyphony. Finally, although this dissertation has focused on the works of one remarkable individual, through the exceptional it is possible to understand the common; understanding the values, judgments, and efforts of Eriugena lends insight into the Carolingian era in which he lived and worked.

An excerpt from Eriugena's *Expositiones* should serve as a fitting close. In the following, Eriugena explained why there must be proportional distinctions in the divine emanations, and, indeed, in all things. Additionally, one may read clearly what Eriugena understood harmony to be and why it best expresses the order of all things in relationship to each other and to God, their ultimate source and end. Simply put, for Eriugena, proportional mediation between extremes is itself harmony and a linchpin for the possibility of beauty in the world:<sup>250</sup>

Si enim Deus equaliter, absque ulla ordinum diuersorum differentia et proprietate et ascensione et descensione uariorum graduum uniuersitatem conditam faceret, nullus fortassis ordo in republica naturarum fieret. Si nullus ordo fieret, nulla harmonia. At si nulla harmonia, nulla sequeretur pulchritudo. In omnino enim similibus sicut nulla

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<sup>250</sup> Boethius defined consonance in remarkable similar terms in *DIM* I:3, "One should not think that when a string is struck, only one sound is produced, or that only one percussion is present in these numerous sounds; rather, as often as air is moved, the vibrating string will have struck it. But since the rapid motions of sounds are connected, no interruption is sensed by the ears, and a single sound, either low or high, impresses the sense. Yet each sound consists of many sounds . . . For consonance is the concord of mutually dissimilar pitches brought together into one" (Bower, trans., Boethius, *De institutione musica*, Book I:3, 12).



harmonia est, ita nulla pulchritudo. Est enim harmonia dissimilium inequaliumque rerum adunatio.

If God is uniform and understood as a universal condition apart from any distinction, quality, ascent, or descent of diverse classes or various grades, there is no possibility of order in the natural world. If there is no order, there is no harmony, and if no harmony it follows that there is no beauty. Indeed, if everything was similar there would be no harmony, and, therefore, no beauty. Harmony is the unification of dissimilar and unequal things.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> MacInnis, trans., *Expositiones*, CCCM 31, 138 (PL122:212). It may go without saying, but Eriugena's understanding of beauty coheres nicely with Plato's golden mean—a three-term analogy. Cf., *Timaeus* 31C-32A, "But it's not possible for two things alone to be beautifully combined apart from some third: some bond must get in the middle and bring them both together. And the most beautiful of these bonds is that which, as much as possible, makes itself and the things bound together one, and proportion is suited by nature to accomplish this most beautifully. For whenever, of three numbers, the middle term of any two of them, whether cubic or square, is such that as the first is to it so is it to the last—and again, conversely, as the last is to the middle so is this middle to the first—then the middle term becomes first and last, while the last and first in turn both become middle terms, so that of necessity it will turn out that all the terms will be the same; and once they've come to be the same in relation to each other, all will be one." (*Plato's Timaeus*, trans. Peter Kalkavage, 61-62.)

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Christian MacInnis was born on 16 July 1981 in Nova Scotia, Canada. Yearly Royal Conservatory Examinations and music festival competitions focused his musical instruction, and, upon graduation from Cobequid Educational Centre, Truro, Nova Scotia, in 1999, John continued his education at Bob Jones University, a liberal arts college in Greenville, South Carolina. At BJU, John studied piano with Prof. Laurence H. Morton and Dr. Peter Davis.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in Piano Performance, *cum laude*, in 2003, John stayed at BJU for a master's degree in Sacred Music, Organ Proficiency. John studied organ with Dr. Edward Dunbar and represented South Carolina in the 2005 MTNA organ competition, division finals. While studying at BJU, John worked at the university's publishing house as a research assistant and served as a contributing author on several high school textbook revisions, including *World History*. John graduated in 2006 and worked as an organ tuner's apprentice in Charlotte, North Carolina, before accepting a position as high school music teacher at Westwood Christian Academy in Miami, Florida, for the 2006-2007 school year.

In 2007, John married Victoria Lynn Cannon and began his studies at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida, where he graduated in 2009 with a master's degree in Historical Musicology. John stayed at FSU to pursue a doctorate in Musicology, which he completed in 2014. While at FSU, John played organ with the Baroque Ensemble, *Cantores Musicae Antiquae*, and *Collegium Musicum*. Additionally, he participated in the Chinese Ensemble and Sekaa Gong Hanuman Agung, FSU's Balinese Gamelan. Also, while living in Tallahassee, John served on the board of the Tallahassee Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. From 2007 to 2012, John worked as Associate Organist and Interim Director of Music for St. Peter's Anglican Church (ACNA).

In 2012, John joined the Music Department at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, where he continues to teach Music Theory and Music History. John has received several pedagogical innovations grants at Dordt College supporting his research in the use of tablet technology in the Music Theory classroom. During the summer of 2014, John will attend the Eastman School of Music's Institute for Music Theory Pedagogy in Rochester, New York.